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THE LIVES OF THE RAKES

VOLUME V

‘OLD Q’ AND BARRYMORE

BY E. BERESFORD CHANCELLOR

THE LIVES OF THE RAKES

VOL. I

"OLD ROWLEY"

VOL. II

THE RESTORATION RAKES:
BUCKINGHAM, ROCHESTER, DORSET,
SEDLEY, ETHEREDGE, WYCHERLEY

VOL. III

CHARTERIS AND WHARTON

VOL. IV

THE HELL-FIRE CLUB:
SANDWICH, DASHWOOD,
WILKES, CHURCHILL, ETC.

VOL. V

"OLD Q" AND BARRYMORE

VOL. VI

THE REGENCY RAKES: THE REGENT,
HERTFORD, HANGER, ETC.



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THE DUKE OF QUEENSBERRY (BY GILLRAY).

(frontispiece)

THE LIVES OF THE RAKES

'OLD Q' AND BARRYMORE

BY

E. BERESFORD CHANCELLOR,
M.A., F.S.A.



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FOREWORD



OF all the rakes who flourished during the latter part of the 18th century, the 4th Duke of Queensbury,—the 'Old Q' of the scandal-mongers and the caricaturists, is the most prominent. There can be few who have not heard of him ; few who, walking down the Piccadilly his ghost has made its own, do not think of him to the exclusion of so many other illustrious phantoms which haunt that thoroughfare.

In the first part of the following pages I have tried to visualise him as he really was, with all his imperfections on his head, but also with some of those traits which may be considered to mitigate, if they cannot condone, his very free and easy mode of existence. He may be said to have had two marked passions : one for women ; the other for the Turf. In both he excelled. Like all rakes he led a life of selfish indulgence ; like most of them he was endowed with plenty of brain-power—a gift he chose to use for the furtherance of his own pleasure rather than for the good of his country. It takes all sorts to make a world ; and it is lucky that ' Old Qs ' are the exception rather than the rule. But there is this to be said for him : he was no hypocrite ; he attempted no more to deceive his contemporaries than he did himself. He was quite frankly a profligate, and as such, although his manner of existence was no doubt reprehensible enough, it did at least escape from that odious dissimulation by which the race of Tartuffes attempts to conceal the licentious activities it makes no effort to dominate.

The second part of this volume is concerned with a still more curious personality—that of Richard, 7th Earl of Barrymore. In his case unconventionality exhibited itself in other

ways ; although in his devotion to the Turf he rivalled, for the first few years of his career, even Old Q himself.

Lord Barrymore earned the title of 'Hellgate' during his meteoric passage across the stage of 18th century life. But it was an age of nicknames, and one cannot quite think he deserved so fuliginous a *sobriquet*. What he was, was a reckless young fool of quality, ready for any mad prank, delighting in shocking an age not very easily shocked, and prepared to shower about his wealth on any project that appealed to his robust and restless temperament. If we are to compare one rake with another, we may say of him that there was much of the Duke of Buckingham in his constitution ; something of the Duke of Queensberry ; a little of Sir Francis Dashwood. But it may be counted to him for righteousness (and truth to tell he wants all the mitigation the impartial can allow him) that there was nothing of Colonel Charteris in his temperament. He did not grow old in vice ; indeed so young was he at the time of his tragic death, that had he not been curiously precocious, it is possible that we should never have heard of his excesses. He is an example of a lack of mental balance, and a want of careful training ; not of the viciousness which is carried on into old age, and which Time accentuates rather than lessens. In this respect he exhibits the greatest antithesis to Old Q ; and it is a singular coincidence that these two, who were, for a few hectic years, contemporaries, should be found likened together as types of the rakes of their period.

It is also curious that both should have had the same historian ; and it is to Mr. J. R. Robinson's biography of each that I am largely indebted for many strange facts in their lives. I need hardly say that much has also been gleaned from contemporary sources ; but as these studies aim solely at giving a general picture of the men with whom they deal, I have not thought it necessary to load my pages with references to the many by-ways in social history in which I have wandered during my researches. The present volume serves as a link between those rakes who formed the Hell Fire Club, and the group which will be dealt with in the last of these series—in which the period of the Regency will be found to afford further examples of what Restif de la Bretonne calls "les bigarreries de l'esprit humain."

I have to thank Messrs. Fores & Co., the famous print-sellers of Piccadilly, for kindly allowing me to reproduce the rare print of 'The Chaise Match,' in their possession.

E. B. C.

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WILLIAM DOUGLAS
DUKE OF QUEENSBERRY



CHAPTER I

THE DUKE OF QUEENSBERRY

THERE is perhaps hardly a more familiar name to students of later Georgian history than that of 'Old Q,' the famous Duke of Queensberry of the reign of George III. and the Regency, and the Lord March of an earlier day. All sorts of legends have gathered around that almost mythical figure ; all kinds of stories, disreputable and otherwise, have become associated with his personality. The Piccadilly of those times is essentially the Piccadilly of Old Q, as he sits leering, and ogling all the pretty women as they pass and repass before the balcony of No. 138. There he is, with the light of concupiscence feebly shining in his senile eyes, holding an umbrella over his disreputable old head ; and there he remains in our imagination, the perennial type of the titled rake of these hundred odd years ago. We, indeed, do but visualise him in the decrepitude of his flesh although in the ever youthful desires of his spirit. We never, somehow, think of him as a young man. It is always as the verdant octogenarian that he

comes back to memory ; ever as the old rip of the Regency, when George III. was beating at the padded walls of Kew or playing on the spinet the quiet, sad melodies of Handel, at Windsor ; and Brummell and the effulgent Prince led the fashion in dress and morals.

Old Q was obsessed by two passions—love of women and love of the turf ; but marked and lasting as was his influence in the latter, it has become overshadowed by his amatory exploits, although these are largely legendary whereas the former can be read in black and white in the Racing Calendar ; and at Newmarket and Ascot and Epsom his hippic successes were gained in the sight of all England which but dimly guessed at his vagaries in other directions.

Many men who have become notorious in one or more ways, have been credited with being either great fools or great knaves in all relations of life. But such a conclusion is falsified by facts. Your thorough-paced ruffian, like for instance Colonel Charteris whose repulsive career I have already discussed in an earlier volume in this series, is really a very rare phenomenon. Few men are all bad ; and Wainewright, the poisoner, had a pretty taste in art and letters, and Charles Peace, the murderer, played the violin with no ordinary skill.

But their ruling passion dominates such amenities ; and because Old Q worshipped at one shrine with an ardour which even old age could not abate,

nobody thinks of him as worshipping at any others. It is the fashion to class such men as he as among the wholly foolish or the entirely vicious of mankind. Those who do things which are outrageous to the feelings of many, are, by many who have not the courage to do them, called brainless or shameless, if not both. Old Q was certainly not among the former class : indeed he was a man of very marked intelligence ; of very engaging manners ; of a very friendly disposition ; and if he was cynical and regardless of public opinion in matters which in this country especially are (or shall we say, were ?) regarded with a curious intolerance, we must remember that he lived in a cynical age and was born in a position which, in those days, was almost synonymous with a flouting of popular sentiment and an airy *insouciance* with regard to our insular code of morals.

Many of the stories once prevalent concerning the wicked things of which his Grace of Queensberry is supposed to have been guilty cannot be substantiated. But there is an old proverb that where there is smoke there is fire, and there is no gainsaying the fact that the fires of Old Q's desires often enough resulted in inevitable obfuscation, as one is sure Dr. Johnson would have preferred to term it. Just, however, as one cannot frequently tell the extent of the fire because of the smoke, so it has resulted that Old Q's temperament or temperature was always being credited with rising to

fever heat, when in truth a very little flame was producing often enough a volume of smoke which, fanned by imagination and exaggeration, had little relation to its cause.

But, after all, Old Q was quite wicked enough to justify his inclusion among our gallery of rakes. And besides, he is differentiated from many of them in this : that the older he got the worse he became. We have seen in other cases how advancing years and declining health (which was for much in the change) sobered the fiery passions of even Buckingham and Rochester ; how Dashwood and Wilkes underwent a change morally for the better, as reflection, added to time, moderated their lax and dissolute habits. The Duke of Queensberry was of quite another kind of temperament : he may be said to have had the courage of his opinions ; and if those opinions were not such as to commend themselves to the *οἱ πολλοί*, that was a matter of the supremest indifference to him. He was essentially of the type of man who cared for none of these things ; and people might think what they liked, without having either the least effect on his conduct or the power of turning him a hair's-breadth from his pleasures.

There are those who regard such characters as a little mad : Old Q was, on the contrary, very sane. He could not, even if he would, and he certainly would not if he could, have laid that flattering unction to his soul that not his trespass but his

madness caused him to do things at which so many of his contemporaries looked askance and at which the unco guid of succeeding generations have wondered "with a foolish face of"—blame.

What he was was a type—perennial, immortal—robust, regardless, cynically selfish. Under the Roman Empire he would have been a boon companion, until he became too much of a rival, of Domitian or Caligula or Tiberius ; one can imagine Caesar favouring him because he was so human and possessed, in one direction, of so much in common with that otherwise very disparate person.

But the London of the Farmer King was a very different centre from the Rome of the Decadence ; and so, as is generally the case, it is in variations of manners and customs and in general environment that we must estimate character—and, truth to tell, the character of Old Q, with every excuse that can be made for it, did not shine brightly in the period and the country into which he happened to be born. Much is forgiven a young rake, because there is always the possibility of reform ; an old rake, who carries to the edge of the grave the carnal turbulence of earlier years, is always a sad and degrading sight.

"This long-lived voluptuary pursued pleasure with as much ardour at fourscore as he had done at twenty." So a writer, discussing his career, said of him just sixty years ago ; and it is this characteristic which his *sobriquet* recalls to those

who only knew Old Q as the protagonist of that famous scene in which he acted Paris to the Goddesses of ladies who were fair but anything (except, no doubt, in his eyes) divine. That notorious episode ; those milk baths ; and that senile figure lying at long last on his death-bed covered by innumerable *billets doux*, which his feeble fingers were powerless to open, are what the memory recalls of the Queensberry of amorous legend.

There is so much in his life forgotten ; so many details which ought equally to be remembered, if we are properly to estimate his complex character as a whole, that although the latter cannot exactly excuse his failings, they may at least be regarded as in some measure extenuating them ; and the Duke of Queensberry of fact may help to reconcile even the most severe with the Old Q of many a well-worn fiction.

Among the innumerable references to the famous rake in letters and diaries of the period, one of the most interesting is that which Sir Nathaniel Wraxall has left us ;¹ and as the writer says himself that he “lived in almost daily habits of intercourse with the Duke during the last seven years of his protracted career,” he had obviously better opportunities of judging his character, although it was at the end of his life, than had those who have asserted loosely so many hearsay anecdotes.

¹ See Wraxall's *Posthumous Memoirs*.

"Few noblemen," he writes, "have occupied a more conspicuous place about the court, and the town, during at least half a century, under the reigns of George the Second and Third. Like Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, he pursued pleasure under every shape; and with as much ardour at fourscore as he had done at twenty. After exhausting all the gratifications of human life, towards its close he sat down at his residence near Hyde Park corner, where he remained a spectator of that moving scene, which Johnson denominated 'the full tide of human existence,' but in which he could no longer take a very active part." "Never," he proceeds, "did any man retain more animation, or manifest a sounder judgment. If I were compelled to name the particular individual who had received from nature the keenest common sense of any person I ever knew, I should select the Duke of Queensberry. Unfortunately, his sources of information, the turf, the drawing-room, the theatre, the great world, were not the most pure, nor the best adapted to impress him with favourable ideas of his own species. Information as acquired from books, he always treated with contempt, and used to ask me, what advantage or solid benefit, I had ever derived from the knowledge that he supposed me to possess of history. . . . Known to be immensely rich, destitute of issue, and unmarried, he formed a mark at which every necessitous man or woman throughout the

Metropolis directed their aim. . . . Throughout his whole life he had been a votary, but not a dupe to women. . . . If he had lived under Charles the Second, he might have disputed for pre-eminence in the favour of that Prince with the Arlingtons, the Buckinghams, the Falmouths, and the Dorsets, so celebrated under his reign."

The record of a foreign contemporary who visited this country in 1802¹ was the result of what was to be learnt by a stranger concerning the Duke from general opinion and public gossip, and Goede, the visitor in question, writes : " There are in London old fools who affect the dress, the levity, the pleasures, of youth, and frequent the seminaries of licentiousness, where they pay for the pleasures they cannot enjoy. A noble duke in London is celebrated for having joined the fox chase when seventy years of age. He was a regular frequenter of every race-course, and piqued himself equally on the publicity of his amours with every young creature who would listen to his gilded proposals. With Bacchus he made as free as with Venus ; and still exists, a monument of public ridicule. These instances however are rare in England ; and never escape the scourge of satire, or the pencil of the caricaturist."

There is, of course, an essential amount of truth in this description ; but the scourge of satire and the pencil of the caricaturist must always be

¹ See *The Stranger in England* by C. A. G. Goede. 3 vols. 1807.

regarded with a certain amount of caution; and although it cannot be denied that Lord March, the Duke of Queensberry, Old Q, what you will, deserved much that was said about him, he also possessed qualities of which nothing or little was said; and these will appear, together with his more notorious actions, in what I shall have to record, concerning his long and, in its way, remarkable career.

Before doing this, however, it may be well to clear the ground by saying something concerning the period during which Old Q lived. That period began in 1725, the year of his birth, and extended to 1810, the year of his death. It thus covers the long reign of George II. and half a century of the longer reign of George III.; from the rise of Walpole to the eve of the Regency. During those eighty-five pregnant years England was passing through a transition stage. It is unnecessary here to set down the momentous domestic and foreign political events which occurred during that extended period, because we are here concerned with quite other matters. But the curious evolution which happened in social annals, in manners and customs, in trend of thought and habits of life, cannot but have had a marked influence on the character of a man who was in and of the world of fashion, who saw life, if not exactly steadily, at least saw it whole, and who was essentially a product of his age with all its artificiality and so much of its commonsense and shrewdness.

One or two facts will, perhaps, better enable the reader to visualise the remarkable character of the period covered by Old Q's life, than any amount of reflections on that long series of years. Thus he was twenty when the Battle of Fontenoy was being fought, and the Peninsular War had been in progress for two years when he died ; Swift expired, " a driveller and a show," when Lord March was on the eve of his majority, and Thackeray was born a year after he had last been seen " sunning himself in Huncamunca's eyes," on that notorious balcony in Piccadilly ; he, who may have seen Handel conducting his oratorios might have seen Mendelssohn and Chopin in their cradles ; he, who had applauded Colley Cibber and " Polly " Fenton applauded Edmund Kean and Grimaldi ; and he, who knew Reynolds and Gainsborough, might have looked on the early efforts of Cruikshank and the childish scrawls of Landseer.

The life of the Court and the life of society in general had wholly changed during Old Q's long drawn-out existence. He had witnessed the quarrels of George II. and one Prince of Wales ; he was to witness the quarrels of George III. and another. Queen Charlotte ruled where Caroline the Illustrious had ruled. The age of the Herveys and Lepels and Bellendens was to give place to that of the Devonshires and Rutlands and Kingstons. We can imagine Lord March strolling about the gardens of Kensington Palace with Lady

Mary Wortley Montagu and Jack Spencer ; or with George Selwyn and Gilly Williams gambling at White's, just as he might have gambled with Fox at Brooks's or walked in the grounds of Buckingham House with Mr. Pitt.

But always, whichever King sat on the throne, whatever minister directed the destinies of the country, whoever was the reigning 'toast,' there was the ever verdant rake, haunting Green Rooms in which he had known such a long succession of actresses and *figurantes* ; known in that notorious White House in Soho Square and in so many other haunts of iniquity ; but above all frequenting the spots where horses were raced, often riding himself, the best gentleman jockey of the day, so unrivalled in his knowledge of everything that pertained to the Turf and its many complex problems, so that 'Nimrod' could say of him, "Whether we consider his judgment, his ingenuity, his invention, or his success, he was one of the most distinguished characters on the English Turf."

In his latter days when he drove out in London, it was always in a dark green Vis-à-vis, as it was called, with long-tailed black horses ; and during the winter he carried a muff. Two servants sat behind him, and his groom, Jack Radford, followed on horseback ready to execute his commissions—commissions most frequently of the character of those which the same henchman undertook when he sat on his horse beneath the balcony of

138 Piccadilly—the carrying of notes and messages to any desirable looking girl who might have attracted the old rip's attention. In those latter days he was, according to Raikes, a little sharp-looking man, very irritable, who swore "like ten thousand troopers ;" and who, thus grown old and inordinately selfish, had long left behind the days when he, like Chesterfield, was the glass of fashion, and scoured London in a carriage with running footmen, or in a more discreet Sedan chair.

If we would seek his equivalent beyond the shores of England, we should compare him with the notorious Duc de Richelieu, of secret staircase and moving panel fame ; of whom as many fuliginous stories are told. The passion for women for which old Q was known far and wide was rather a mania, unbridled by that acuteness and good sense which he showed in his other dominating passion—that for the Turf ; and his cynical indifference to public opinion, which became more marked with advancing years, caused him to do and say things the character of which can but be adumbrated.

Of all his exploits perhaps the most notorious was that episode at his house in Piccadilly when he performed in his own drawing-room the scene of Paris and the three Goddesses, to which I have already referred. Let Wraxall tell the tale :

"Three of the most beautiful females to be found in London presented themselves before him,

precisely as the divinities of Homer are supposed to have appeared to Paris on Mount Ida : while he, habited like ' the Dardan shephard,' holding a gilded apple in his hand, conferred the prize on her whom he deemed the fairest." Well might the diarist add that, " neither the second Duke of Buckingham, commemorated by Pope, whose whole life was a voluptuous whim, nor any other of the licentious noblemen his contemporaries, appear to have ever realized a scene so analogous to the manners of that profligate period. The correct days of George the Third were reserved to witness its accomplishment."

The man who could do such things was not unnaturally credited with all sorts of enormities which prurient imagination could suggest. But it is a curious thing that two very simple things were also laid to his charge. One of these was the wearing of a glass eye. If everyone who is obliged to do this is to be regarded as a reckless libertine, I fear the optician's trade is likely to suffer. In those days, of course, such things were something in the nature of a novelty ; but one has yet to learn the connection between depravity and a not unnatural desire to obviate a personal defect.

The other charge brought against the Duke was that he used to indulge in milk baths, as a means of recuperating his strength. He might (and it would probably have been far more efficacious) have drunk gallons of milk, without a word being

said ; but to bathe in it ! There was, however, another reason for the horror this apparently inspired, and a not unnatural one, for J. H. Jesse, writing in 1843, remarks that in those days even there were many persons still living who remembered the almost universal prejudice against drinking milk which prevailed in the Metropolis, in consequence of its being supposed that this common necessary of life might have been retailed from the daily lavations of the Duke of Queensberry.¹

Other stories will unfold themselves in the course of the narrative concerning the Duke's life which many may think I am unconsciously long time coming to. The fact is, however, that it seemed necessary to give a sort of bird's-eye view of the character which, rightly or wrongly, he earned for himself in the eyes of his contemporaries ; a character which nothing will eradicate. Mr. J. R. Robinson has done all that human ingenuity can, with the aid of documentary facts and infinite patience and care, in some way to rehabilitate Old Q's character. But from his pages, with their insistence on the Duke's good manners, shrewdness, commonsense, and cleverness, there still emerges something, if not all, of the Old Q of a thousand wild and improbable legends. He must, one thinks, have been a thorough-paced profligate, even if only a tithe of such stories be true ; no man gains a reputation, for good or ill, unless he

¹ *Selwyn and his Contemporaries.*

has done something to earn it ; and there is no denying the fact that Old Q enjoyed a life long enough in which to consolidate a claim to being either a good or a bad man. Some are good with bad traits ; some are bad with good ones. I am inclined to place the Duke of Queensberry among the latter. That he was not wholly bad, I mean that he could not exhibit certain redeeming qualities, is true enough ; of almost all the rakes I have heard of (with the exception of Colonel Charteris) one can say as much. But when a man is born in a great position, is possessed of unbounded wealth, and exercises wide-spread influence, and yet fails to show that he has done anything during a very long life except gratify his own inordinate desires, one cannot wonder that such a man is regarded, in spite of charm of manner and such-like amenities, as an encumbrance in any society. The Duke of Queensberry was able to purchase applause ; the trouble is that he never attempted to do anything to earn it ; and it is remarkable that, without much to sustain his position except his wealth and the power his wealth gave him, he should have bulked so largely in a period when, amid much that was artificial and much that was vicious, nearly all who have made a name did something beyond being merely selfish and voluptuous, to justify it. Even among our gallery of rakes, most of the others were eminent in other things besides sensuality : Buckingham produced at least one

play that ranks as literature ; Sedley and Etheredge and Rochester all left their mark on the poetry of the period ; Wilkes and Churchill, Whitehead and Lloyd, are famous, in varying degrees, for other things : even Sandwich was a hard worker, and Dashwood at least held, if he did not shine in, public office. But Queensberry did nothing, beyond the seduction of women, except ride steeple-chases and waste his power and wealth by becoming an outstanding patron of the Turf. It is a poor show for all the advantages to which he was born, and I cannot think that any impartial judge will deem him adequately to have filled the position into which he was born, and in which he amused himself at least during the span of life allotted to man on the authority of the Psalmist.

Even if the Duke of Queensberry was not guilty of much which popular imagination has laid to his charge, he was at least guilty in this : that he had immense wealth, and misused it ; vast opportunities, and neglected them ; intellectual powers above the ordinary, and misapplied them. The sin that should be imputed to his frustrate ghost is " the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin " of the poet rather than those which a shocked generation regarded as his most heinous offences, and from which the eyes of later ages have been averted in that sort of horror which but feebly conceals a latent curiosity.

But it is full time to turn from such generalities as these to the established facts of Old Q's life—wherein we may read of matters every whit as strange as those that mirrored themselves in Macbeth's face.



CHAPTER II

THE DUKE OF QUEENSBERRY (*Continued*)

THERE is no necessity to climb into that genealogical tree on the branches of which hang the escutcheons of so many illustrious members of the great house of Douglas ; whose titles were so numerous and splendid, but to which the dukedom was not added till the reign of Charles II. Suffice it to say that William Douglas was the son of William, second Earl of March, by his wife, Lady Anne Hamilton, Countess of Ruglen, daughter and heiress of Lord John Hamilton, 4th son of William, Duke of Hamilton, who was created Earl of Ruglen in 1697. He was born, in a house still existing, at Peebles, on December 5th, 1725, and was baptized on the following 10th of December. Mr. Robinson says that he was born on the 16th. The *Dictionary of National Biography* gives no precise date, but states the year to have been 1724. But it was not till fifty-two years later that he succeeded to the Dukedom of Queensberry, on

the death of his cousin Charles, the 3rd Duke,¹ without issue.

William Douglas was but five years of age when his father, that "good natured gentleman, handsome in his person," as Mackay terms him, and who possessed few if any of the characteristics of his notorious son, died (March 7th, 1731), and the boy became third Earl of March. In 1748, on the death of his mother, he inherited from her the Ruglen earldom, together with the considerable estates in Scotland attached to that title.

On the death of his father a guardian was appointed to look after young March and his possessions, and the Hon. John Douglas of Broughton, his uncle, was selected for the post—a post he held for only a year, as he died in 1732. A new guardian thus being necessary, one was found in Charles, 3rd Duke of Queensberry, at whose seat at Amesbury no doubt young March was a not infrequent visitor, although as he grew up he showed a marked dislike for country life, and for this place in particular. There must, however, have been one thing at Amesbury that interested him, notably the stables where the Duke who, Angelo tells us, was in his younger days "a great frequenter of the *manège*," kept a large stud of excellent horses. As, too, his household establishment was main-

¹ The well-known friend of Pope and patron of Gay and other literary lights of the period, and the husband of Prior's 'Kitty.' There are some interesting memories of both in Angelo's *Reminiscences*.

tained with all the grandeur of the last age, the boy probably enjoyed his visits to the south and may have imbibed something of his later love of horse-flesh while galloping his pony on the downs round Stonehenge, and his familiarity with equine matters while talking to the grooms and stable boys at Amesbury.¹

Both the Duke and Duchess, too, must have been easy to get on with even from the point of view of a young boy. The former was good natured and benevolent; the latter anything but straitlaced, as the remark she once made to Swift indicates. The Dean was staying at Amesbury when a village marriage took place. "So you have a wedding to-day, my lady duchess," said he, "Yes, Mr. Dean," replied her grace; "silly, silly young people, to choose this of all days in the year—

‘ St. Barnaby bright,
The longest day, and the shortest night ’ ! ”

It has been said that Lord March obtained his education from his later contact with the world, and there is no doubt the kind of information he possessed—in many directions both extensive and peculiar—was such as could be but indifferently

¹ There was a certain Miss Skaites who had been attached to this household, whom Angelo knew. She lived to a great age, and always regarded the 3rd Duke and his duchess with the utmost veneration. But she could not away with 'that Lord March,' as she contemptuously called him, who she said had succeeded to the titles "though not to the *dignities* of the dear lord duke."

learned from books. He had, however, received the grounding of knowledge at a public school ; for he was sent to Winchester, then much favoured by Scottish noble families, in 1735, and there he remained for five years. Among his school-fellows was his cousin, Lord Drumlanrig, whose death a few years after paved the way to his succession to the Dukedom of Queensberry, and Lord Eglintoun, who was, later, to be associated with him in that famous match against Time which created such a sensation at the moment. The fact that Lord Elcho and Lord Mar and Kellie were also contemporaries of his at Winchester shows how popular Wykeham's foundation was with the northern aristocracy at this period.

A Scotsman is born clever (although, as I write these words, I apprehensively glance over my shoulder with the expectation of an admonitory glance from a bulky, heaving, shadowy form), and by the aid of Winchester tutors and his own quick wits young March no doubt learned quite enough from books to enable him to learn more from life without feeling the loss of a 'Varsity training—a training which, truth to tell, in those days was hardly likely to increase his knowledge. His remark to Wraxall which I have quoted in the foregoing chapter sufficiently indicates his attitude towards the study of the past—an attitude he no doubt assumed in youth and was truthful enough not to deny (as so many are in the habit of doing)

in later years. What he actually learned from his preceptors was what was then regarded as sufficient, especially for a rich and titled young man ; and a little of the classics, with a little French, and the " three Rs " as a sort of necessary adjunct, was the weight he carried on the course of life.

It need hardly be said, in the case of one whose later career was to be notorious for many things, that reports credit him with having begun his acquaintance with the *arcana* of life even while he was a boy at Winchester, and escapades in London are mentioned as among the other experiences he gained during this time. It seems improbable, as he was but fifteen when he left school, and it was later, no doubt, that he began to absorb that knowledge in which he became so great an adept and with which he gained so peculiar an intimacy.

I introduced just now a sporting metaphor, because it was quite early in his career that Lord March evinced that love of the Turf which was one of his two ruling passions. It is curious, as Mr. Robinson has not failed to suggest, how in Edinburgh, where for some time Lord March disported himself, with its then holy horror of racing, he should have become initiated into the secrets of the science in which he was shortly to become so proficient. However it was, he soon imbibed not only a remarkable love but also an intimate knowledge of the sport of kings ; and, as we shall see, he was but twenty-three when he first began to

run horses at Newmarket, and commenced that career as a pillar of the Turf in which he shone so conspicuously and for so long.

But if Edinburgh was hardly a likely place in which to master the intricacies of racing, it was quite capable of affording means for indulgence in another form of pleasure ; and society in the northern capital gambled and played cards with an ardour hardly exceeded by that of London itself. We have seen how the notorious Charteris there swindled the Duchess of Argyll out of a large sum ; and ample evidence is available that the fair sex were as inveterate gamesters in private houses as were the men in clubs and gambling-hells. One outstanding lady of title, Lady Cassillis, who also actually ran a public gaming-house in London and pleaded her privilege as a peeress when the House of Lords took up the matter, was a relation of Lord March, and no doubt in her house in Edinburgh the young man began that experience of play which he was to enlarge in the famous rooms of White's ¹ and Brooks's, and in which he no doubt indulged in many of the notorious gambling-hells which congregated about St. James's and the Haymarket.

One can imagine, however, that the more or less limited distractions of Edinburgh could not have been so much to the taste of a young man of Lord

¹ He was elected a member of White's in 1747 ; he did not join Brooks's till 1764.

March's temperament ; and it is therefore with no surprise that we hear of his betaking himself to London, of which he had already had intermittent experience. It is generally supposed that he did this in 1746. The fact that in that year he came of age is a sufficient reason to date his flitting ; and a variety of reasons may have prevented him from following his heart's desire earlier.

His arrival in the capital made no special stir ; but he found all doors open to him ; and as the bearer of a great name, the possessor of an attractive if not exactly a handsome person, with good manners and money, it is not surprising to learn that he was hailed as a recruit to the army of men about town, and as an object of interest to the women. He was quickly elected a member of the young club at White's, and began to take his place as a man of fashion among the gay throng that congregated in the relatively exiguous realms of what was called at that time, and for many years after, the *haut ton*. It is significant of Lord March's shrewdness even at this early age, that in spite of these novel attractions he was not oblivious to the main chance in other directions than those of cards and dice. In the year in which he had been elected to London's premier club an Act was passed for abolishing the hereditary jurisdiction of the Scottish peers. Now Lord March held the Sheriffship of Peebles and what was termed the regality of Linton and Newlands, in virtue of

his title. When, therefore, he saw himself about to be deprived of these offices, he put in a claim for five thousand pounds as compensation for their loss—a sum probably far in advance of their actual worth ; so that when he was awarded something over two thirds of his claim, he probably reckoned that he had not done so badly.

Indeed it was never in Lord March's way to do badly in such matters ; and as we shall see, although he must have expended during his lifetime huge sums of money, and possessed a vast income, he was never above adding to his resources by a natural wit and perspicacity which he brought across the border with him, when he descended among the southrons in the year of grace 1746.†

Two years later he received another accession of fortune by the death of his mother. That lady, Countess of Ruglen in her own right, had married, *en secondes nocces*, on January 2nd, 1747, Anthony Sawyer, one of the Deputy Paymasters of the Forces during the '45 ; but on April 21st of the following year, when on a journey to London, she expired suddenly, and Lord March not only succeeded her in the title but also in the estates attached to it.

The Earl of March and Ruglen, to give him his full titles, now began his career on the Turf, of which he was destined to be for so long a shining light. His biographer has collected, in an appendix to his volume, an analysis of the Earl's

racing exploits, by which we see that with the exception of two years, 1768 and 1803, his colours were carried in various events from 1748 to 1805 without a break—a period of fifty-seven years ; which, if not a record, must very nearly be one. He began in a mild way with one horse—a chestnut gelding, with which he won a hundred guineas at Newmarket on April 13th, 1748. But he also rode two other races himself¹ in that year, winning them both. Indeed there is no doubt that it was due to his own equestrian prowess, and his personal familiarity with all the mysteries of the Turf, that he was enabled to cut such a conspicuous and successful figure in an environment which has proved so disastrous to many less knowing and less shrewd sportsmen. There must, indeed, have been few who could get the better of Lord March in such matters ; he was a match for all the sharpers and blacklegs that haunted the meetings at Newmarket and Ascot, Doncaster and Epsom ; and if he was on occasion lucky, it was but the luck that attends those who give to a favourite hobby infinite patience and consummate knowledge and care.

But it was not merely in running horses or in riding them that Lord March distinguished himself. He delighted in breaking records or in making them. To pit a horse against someone else's horse, or his jockeyship against someone else's capabili-

¹ In one of these he beat his cousin, the Duke of Hamilton, husband of one of the lovely Gunning sisters.



The Chaise Match.
 A. J. C. Club.
 1874.
 The Chaise Match.
 A. J. C. Club.
 1874.
 The Chaise Match.
 A. J. C. Club.
 1874.

THE CHAISE MATCH.

ties in that respect, was not enough for the ardent young sportsman. He would pit himself against Time, and it was that famous match against the clock which is as well remembered as are his later and less commendable exploits in other directions.

In the famous betting-book of White's club there appears the following entry :

"Octr. 18. 1749. Col. Waldegrave betts Ld. March Fifty guineas, that his Lordship does not win the Chaise match.

N.B. Ld. Anson goes Col. Waldegrave halves. paid."

It is this 'Chaise match,' the subject of a well-known print (here reproduced) which exercised Lord March's ingenuity and which is remembered as one of the outstanding events of the day.

He was associated, in this attempt to outstrip Time, with the Earl of Eglington,¹ and these two peers wagered Theobald Taaffe (Count Taaffe) and Andrew Sprowle, Esq. one thousand guineas, that they would cause a four-wheeled carriage, carrying a man and drawn by four horses, to run a course of nineteen miles in an hour.²

¹ Alexander Montgomerie, the tenth Earl, whom, by the way, McLean once robbed, and whom, in 1769, Mungo Campbell, an Excise Officer, murdered. His only official position was that of Lord of the Bedchamber.

² Theobald Taaffe, who was once M.P. for Arundel, was a noted gambler. He was an Irishman, and Walpole says he changed his religion to fight a duel, and was "a gamester, usurer, adventurer." He was associated with Edward Montagu in a gambling scandal with a Jew, in Paris, in 1751.

One can well imagine what excitement was created in sporting circles by such a wager, at a period when celerity in transit in any form was unknown. Even in these days when we seem almost to have annihilated time and space by a thousand ingenious contrivances, the covering of such a distance in sixty minutes by horses ridden by outriders and not only drawing a four-wheeled carriage but that carriage containing a man, seems remarkable enough ; and, as we have seen, Col. Waldegrave and Lord Anson were so certain it could not be accomplished that they risked their fifty guineas on the result.

The preparations for the match were of a most elaborate and exhaustive character. In those days the art of carriage-building was a very different thing from what it was later to become. Indeed it can hardly be termed an art at all—it was a mere mechanical process by which were produced heavy cumbersome chariots innocent alike of springs and pneumatic tyres, whose wheels were, in the then condition of the roads, made rather for resistance than speed. The difficulty in getting designed and executed something entirely novel and of the required lightness was, indeed, such that several vehicles were made before Wright of Long Acre at last produced the desired result on the following lines :

“ To satisfy the accommodating terms of the match, ‘ to carry a man,’ it was not requisite to

have a body fitted on the carriage ; this, then, was discarded at once as being unnecessary in weight and requirement. Therefore the term 'carriage' was adhered to pure and simple, and was on lines familiar to all—the 'brake' used by horsebreakers, but without the high bench or of the solid character these vehicles are. The back carriage of Lord March's machine was united to the fore by means of the usual bar, which had also cords fixed to springs from small uprights to keep the bar steady and in line, as well as to avoid the jolting and swerving of the occupant of the seat, slung on leather straps, and covered with velvet, between the two hind wheels. The boxes of the wheels were brass, to which were fixed oil drop-cans for lubricating purposes. The pole and bars were of thin wood lapped with wire to strengthen them, while steel springs were used in both carriage and bars." So much for the vehicle, on which much thought and money were expended before its satisfactory production. "For harness recourse was had principally to silk and whale-bone ; the breechings of the horses were wholly made of the latter, while silk was used entirely for the traces. The latter were ingeniously housed in boxes, regulated by a kind of check-spring, so that should one of the horses have held back, the slack of the trace would have run into the box and prevented entanglement. The total weight of carriage and harness was two and a half hundredweight."

But troublesome as must have been the conception and carrying out, in those days, of such a vehicle with its adequate powers of resistance combined with its minimum of weight and bulk, the selection and training of the four horses which were to draw it were even more so ; and it is said that upwards of half a dozen horses died under the rigorous training to which they were subjected, at a cost to their joint owners of as many hundreds of pounds. The four that were eventually chosen, as having endured the gruelling necessary to get them into fit condition and as having shewn their prowess as racers, were, as leaders, 'Tawney,' purchased from Mr. Greville, and 'Roderick Random,' late the property of Mr. Stanford ; and as wheelers, 'Chance,' bought from the Duke of Hamilton, and 'Little Dan,' from Parson Thomson, of Beverley. The names of these equine heroes deserve perpetuation as much, I think, as do those of their jockeys, of whom, however, only one is recorded, namely that of William Everett, the other three being lads employed in Lord March's stable. The passenger was his groom, and was appropriately dressed in his employer's racing colours—red and black. The riders are described as wearing blue satin waistcoats, buckskin breeches, white silk stockings and black velvet caps.

At length the much looked-for event took place, on Newmarket Heath, on August 29th, 1750, at seven o'clock in the morning. The course was by

the Warren and Rubbing Houses, through the Ditch, and thence, by the right, round a piece of ground four miles in length, which had been staked off for the occasion.

Away they went and at such a pace (the horses actually, it is said, running away with their riders for some distance) that they covered the first four miles in nine minutes. One wonders how the passenger, Lord March's groom, felt during this rapid transit! One visualises him hanging on like grim Death to anything he could lay hold of; swaying fearfully, but grim and determined, what time the jockeys were first merely keeping their mounts straight on the course, and when the first fine ardour was over, urging them on to further efforts. One shudders to think of the gyrations of that two and a half hundredweight of wheels and framework which they were dragging along in their mad career.

The general excitement must have been tremendous at Newmarket on that August morning; and probably, from what we know of his character, Lord March was the calmest of those who watched the race. The result was astonishing; for the three umpires confirmed the fact that the nineteen miles had been covered in exactly fifty-three minutes, twenty-seven seconds; so that there were just over six and a half minutes to spare!

One does not know what extraneous bets Lord March and Lord Eglintoun made on the event;

but the wager itself which they won could hardly have repaid the expenses to which they had been put ; and the loss of horses by over-training, the building of various carriages before one was found suitable, the gratuities to the riders and others (one hopes the groom was well compensated for his jolting) and the preparation of the course, must have cost far more than the thousand guineas they pocketed. But this was but a trifling consideration, and the outcome of the match was of far more importance to Lord March than its monetary value, as it at once raised him to a position of authority in the racing world which he was to hold for over half a century.

I may here conveniently mention two other wagers ¹ of an unusual character which Lord March made, although they date from some years later than the race against Time. The first of these arose through the fact that Lord March had on several occasions observed a coachbuilder's workman trundling along a wheel with astonishing deftness and rapidity ; he was also acquainted with a man, one of the assistants at Betty's famous fruit-shop in St. James's Street, who was a remarkably quick sprinter. To a mind like his, always intent on betting on everything, these two circumstances suggested the basis for a match between a man

¹ The details are given of both these circumstances in the Memoirs of R. L. Edgeworth, begun by himself and concluded by his daughter Maria. 1844.

running alone and one trundling a wheel ; he backing the latter, while plenty were found to lay odds on the former. Curiously enough Lord March had made it a condition that his man should trundle one of the back wheels of his carriage which was smaller than that which the man was accustomed to run with ; this fact had been observed by his opponents, who felt thus doubly sure of the success of the unencumbered man. It was only the day before the match that Lord March tried his man with both the large and the small wheel, and then found that with the former he progressed much the faster. He was, however, not a man to be beaten if human ingenuity could avert such a disaster ; and in his dilemma, for he had only twenty-four hours in which to hit on some plan, he consulted the well-known sportsman and man about town, Sir Francis Delaval. The result of their discussion was the formation of a raised track, made of planks, on which the shorter wheel should run, thus giving it the value of a larger one. Workmen laboured continuously to construct this long and costly platform, and it was finished in time for the match. Being regarded as no infringement of the terms of the wager, it enabled Lord March's man to win easily.

The other wager did not actually materialise. It was laid with Richard Edgeworth, the father of Maria, and famous for his scientific inventions. Lord March happened to say to him one evening

at Ranelagh that he was unable to be at Newmarket for the ensuing meeting there, but that he intended having relays of horsemen who should bring him intelligence of the results. Edgeworth being told that Lord March expected thus to know the winners by nine o'clock in the evening, remarked that he would himself arrange to know them five hours earlier ; and laid £500 to that effect. When, however, the parties met next day to place their bets on record, Edgeworth happened to say that he was not going to rely on horses for his information ; and his expressed certainty as to his success made Lord March so suspicious that he declined to proceed in the matter. It appears that Edgeworth was relying on a system of semaphores—so that his wager was practically a certainty.

Although at this time, and for the matter of that during the whole of this life, the Turf occupied such a large space in Lord March's interests, those interests were at once so varied and so absorbing that it is by no means only on the race-course that we find him indulging in amusement. If there is one passage in Walpole's letters that is well known it is his description of the party which Lady Caroline Petersham got together for a jaunt to Vauxhall, when they minced chickens in a china bowl, and Betty, the fruit-girl of St. James's Street, waited on them. This ' picnic ' took place in June 1750, two months before the famous race against Time, and Lord March was of the party, which included

the Duke of Kingston, Mr. Withed, "a pretty Miss Beauclerc, and a very foolish Miss Sparre," with little Miss Ashe singing in the barge as they went.

But let Horace tell of it in his own way : "We paraded some time up the river, and at last debarked at Vauxhall. There, if we had so pleased, we might have had the vivacity of our party increased by a quarrel, for a Mrs. Lloyd, who is supposed to be married to Lord Haddington, seeing the two girls following Lady C. and Miss Ashe, said aloud, 'Poor girls, I am sorry to see them in such bad company!' Miss Sparre, who desired nothing so much as the fun of seeing a duel, a thing which, though she is fifteen, she has never been so lucky to see—took due pains to make Lord March resent this ; but he, who is very lively and agreeable, laughed her out of this charming frolic with a great deal of humour."

He goes on to tell how they then picked up Lord Granby, "arrived very drunk from Jenny's Whim ;¹ and how, having arrived at Vauxhall, they set to on their chickens and the strawberries that Betty had brought in hampers, and generally so enjoyed themselves that "from eleven o'clock till half an hour after one we had the whole concourse round our booth : at last, they came into the little gardens of each booth on the sides of ours, till Harry Vane took up a bumper, and drank their healths, and was proceeding to treat them

¹ A well-known tavern in Chelsea at that period.

with still greater freedom. It was three o'clock before we got home." Oh ! Horace !

Although Lord March was not such a fool as to engage in a quarrel, and possibly an encounter, to satisfy a young lady of Miss Sparre's¹ irresponsible character, he was not long after destined nearly to be involved in another duel ; and it occurred in this way : A race had been arranged between one of his horses and one belonging to a certain Irish nobleman. It so happened, however, that the jockey who rode the former was lighter in weight than his competitor, and was, therefore, obliged to carry a belt loaded with shot to equalise matters. It is said that during the race Lord March's jockey managed to get rid of the encumbrance, but was seen to throw it off by someone friendly to Lord March or who had backed his horse, and this person slipped the belt into the jockey's pocket before he returned to the scale. This was, however, observed by the owner of the beaten horse, who rushing up to the jockey threatened there and then to thrash him unless he acknowledged who had incited him to the fraud. The terrified boy, in order to save his own skin, threw the blame on Lord March, whereupon the Irishman sought out his lordship and roundly accused him of it. Lord March retorted in such a way as still more to infuriate his opponent, who

¹ She was the daughter of Baron Sparre, one of Charles XII.'s officers.

subsequently sent him a challenge. This was at once accepted, and a meeting arranged ; but when the parties arrived on the ground, imagine Lord March's astonishment to see his challenger accompanied not only by his second but by a man carrying a large coffin, which he placed on the ground, end up, with its lid facing him and on the lid his name and titles duly engraved with that very day indicated as that of his death !

Lord March, if not exactly a timid man, was certainly not a specially courageous one, and the sight of such certain preparations gave him what is termed a cold shudder. He approached his antagonist and at once upbraided him for such an unscrupulous attempt at terrorisation. To which the Irish peer calmly replied that he never missed his man and was quite certain of the result turning in his favour. Whereupon Lord March, thinking that discretion was the better part of valour, made a complete apology ; and thus the affair ended.

Such is the story which was current during Lord March's lifetime, and which, as it *is* a story, I give. But, personally, I have the greatest difficulty in believing it ; for although Lord March never did fight a duel, there is no reason to suppose that, had sufficiently good cause been shown, he never would have done so. That he was responsible for the original fraud (if there is any truth in that part of the tale) is equally unbelievable. For never,

during his long and intimate association with racing, was he accused or suspected of not running straight in every acceptation of the word.

In the meanwhile he indulged in his passion for the Turf with characteristic ardour, and during the year 1751 we find his horses taking part in eight events. It was not, however, a very successful year for his stable, for he won only one of these races. This fact in no way disconcerted him, however, and probably with a view to keeping an eye on his racing establishment, as well as for his own convenience, he set up a house at Newmarket overlooking the course, whence he could personally superintend the training and watch the trials of his horses, besides having a *pied à terre* on the spot where so many of the races they took part in were run. He seems to have exercised uncommon shrewdness in all these matters. He selected his grooms and jockeys with infinite care, and he kept them in the dark to such an extent that, it is said, not one of them knew what horse he was to ride until he was actually weighed—a fact that, as has been pointed out, makes the story of the Irishman I have just related more than ever improbable.

He was, besides, fond of riding races himself, a diversion at which he was an adept and which he continued so long into life that when, many years later, he was supposed to be on the point of marriage with Lady Henrietta Stanhope, a lampoon

appeared, in which the following verses refer to his passion for jockeyship—and other things :

“ Say, Jockey Lord, adventurous Macaroni,
So spruce, so old, so dapper, stiff and starch,
Why quit the amble of thy racing pony ?
Why on a filly risk the name of March ? ”

“ Ah ! think, squire Gordon, in spite of Pembroke’s tits,
An able rider oft has lost his seat ;
Young should the jockey be who mounts such bits,
Or he’ll be run away with every heat.”

As may be supposed, the expenses of his racing establishment involved Lord March in a very large annual outlay, especially as during his earlier years on the Turf his successes were neither many nor conspicuous. This fact has been adduced as a reason for his contesting a bond for £10,575 which his mother had given to her second husband, Mr. Sawyer. The matter was a lengthy and involved one, and the case having been carried up to the House of Lords, was finally decided in Mr. Sawyer’s favour.

But if much of Lord March’s time was, as we have seen, taken up by racing, much must also have been occupied in a variety of other ways—among which the laying and carrying through of all kinds of wagers form a conspicuous item. Throughout his life he had a passion for such means of winning and losing money and an extraordinary cleverness in devising schemes on which wagers could be laid with a certain amount of

impunity. One of the most remarkable of these was that in which he made a bet with a friend that he would cause a letter to be conveyed a distance of fifty miles in an hour. The thing seemed impossible, but was simplicity itself when the method of doing it was revealed—like the famous instance of Columbus and the egg. Twenty cricketers were engaged ; the letter was enclosed in a cricket ball, and the necessary calculations having been made as to the distance the men should stand from each other, and the number of throws each would have to make, the performers stood in a vast circle and threw the ball as fast as possible to each other. So clever were they that it was found at the expiration of the agreed time that they had really made the letter traverse a far greater distance than was necessary to win the bet.

Another wager was on very different lines and seems to have originated with that well-known man about town and sportsman, the famous Whip, Sir John Lade—Lord March, or the Duke of Queensberry as he had then become, being merely a taker. This was a bet laid by Sir John, for a thousand guineas, that he would produce a man who could eat more at a sitting than anyone selected by his opponent could do. The Duke won, but being prevented from ‘ assisting ’ at the scene, received from one of his representatives the following laconic account of the result :

“ My lord,—I have not time to state particulars, but merely to acquaint your grace that your man beat his antagonist by a pig and an apple-pie.

(Signed) I. P.”

In the betting-book of White’s will be found wagers laid or taken by Lord March on a variety of subjects, ranging from the respective capabilities of race-horses to the possibilities of his being married before one of his friends. But these records represent but an infinitesimal part of the wagers he was never tired of making or suggesting. It was sufficient for someone to lay a challenge on almost anything to bring him into the open ; and whether he knew anything about the subject or not was a matter of indifference to him, as he could generally rely on somebody to assist him with the requisite information. Thus when the Earl of Orford challenged all and sundry to produce a greyhound that should beat a certain famous animal of that breed which he owned, Lord March, who did not possess one, much less one with any special merits as a courser, immediately accepted the wager. He resorted to, of all people, Elwes, the notorious miser of Berkshire, who, for some reason, he imagined would know of someone who owned the kind of dog he was looking for ; nor was he disappointed, for Elwes introduced him to a certain Captain Hatt, who was able to supply so swift an animal that Lord March had little difficulty in winning the bet.

That a certain amount of good luck attended him in his ventures is undeniable, but it was that species of luck which generally attends on infinite patience and sound fundamental knowledge of men as well as of animals. For instance, he was never one to lay wagers with those whom he had any reason to suppose could not pay if they lost ; and it was this wise principle that led him to make his bets with such ' sound ' men as the Duke of Cumberland, of Culloden notoriety, or Mr. Jennings—' Dog Jennings,' as he was called, of antiquarian renown ; and, indeed, all those with whom Lord March had such relations will be found to have possessed wealth and—over-confidence. He was, truth to tell, as ' canny ' a Scotsman as ever crossed the border to the discomfiture of the southrons.

But although he seems to have been lucky in what may be called extraneous wagers, on the Turf his success was, for many years, not specially conspicuous, the proportion of winning horses to those entered for various races being relatively small. For instance in 1754 he had horses in eleven events of which he carried off but two ; he did slightly better in 1756 with ten events and four wins, and in 1757, with nine events, and four successes. But his luck varied, as is generally the case, although it was not till 1770 that his successes were in adequate relation to his entries. Thenceforth, as the Racing Calendar

shows, he was, with but a few exceptions, a very successful competitor; and his early failures may be regarded as *ballons d'essai*, in which he was gradually feeling his way to later triumphs.



CHAPTER III

THE DUKE OF QUEENSBERRY (*Continued*)

THE position of Lord March was, at this time, from a worldly point of view, an important one. He was not only a double-barrelled Earl, but there was but one frail life—that of the Duke of Queensberry's second son who had become heir to the title on the death of his brother, Lord Drumlanrig, in 1745—between him and a great dukedom. He was wealthy and healthy; and if he was not exactly wise in all directions, he was certainly endowed with plenty of brains. He had made a name on the turf as an ardent, if not a consistently successful, owner of race-horses, and he was hardly less known for those amazing wagers which he was always laying or accepting. He was, besides, what may be termed a society-man, a haunter of the *coulisses*, a determined gambler at cards. Indeed he might have said, with the Latin poet, that he was indifferent to nothing human. Thackeray describes him in *The Virginians*, in a well-known passage: "My Lord March has not one, but several devils. He loves gambling, he

loves horse-racing, he loves betting, he loves drinking, he loves eating, he loves money, he loves women." The novelist has, indeed, not a little to say concerning the nobleman who bulked so largely in every sort of London society, from that in Mayfair and Pall Mall, to that in the rooms of Mrs. Cornelys or the flash cribs of the further east. We meet with him at a prize-fight between Sutton and Pigg, "in a riding-frock and plain scratch-wig," when some monetary transactions took place between the Earl and "a stout personage," in whom may probably be recognised the Duke of Cumberland. Later, Warrington accompanies his noble friend to his hotel in Covent Garden, where they play picquet—to the advantage of Lord March. Subsequently the game is interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Betty with Lady Maria's letter from Tunbridge, praying for Warrington's help. It is characteristic of Lord March, that when Warrington orders a post-chaise to carry him to the Wells, he should immediately lay wagers on the journey: "Bet you, you don't do it within the hour! bet you, you don't do it within five quarters of an hour! bet you four to one—or I'll take your bet, which you please—that you're not robbed on Blackheath! Bet you, you are not at Tunbridge Wells before midnight!" cries Lord March. "Done!" says Mr. Warrington. And my Lord carefully notes down the terms of the three wagers in his pocket book.

It is a little vignette which reveals one of the many facets of Lord March's character with admirable force and precision. But it was racing that occupied most of his energy and ingenuity; and he seems to have divided his time pretty equally between Newmarket, superintending his stables and sometimes riding his own horses, and London. In addition to the house he had built at the former place, and his racing establishment there, he also had a stud at Saxham, near Bury St. Edmund's; and there is no doubt that he did as much to improve the breed of horses in England as he did to raise racing to a higher level than it had occupied before his appearance as a notability of the Turf.

Notwithstanding inevitable runs of ill-fortune—ill-fortune which he records in some of his extant letters to his friend George Selwyn—he was, on the whole, remarkably successful in his betting, if not always with his horses, and is said to have won as much as a quarter of a million on the Turf during his racing career. It was probably during one of his bad seasons that he sold his stud of brood mares. This was in 1756, in which year he only won four events out of ten, and possibly involved himself heavily in backing the unsuccessful horses. He and Selwyn mutually helped each other in these crises, and in one letter he tells the latter, who was then also experiencing a 'crisis' in his affairs, that "there will be no bank-

ruptcy without we are both ruined at the same time."

It is a pleasant trait in a character, not otherwise admirable, that on this particular occasion (symptomatic of many) Lord March should urge his friend to make his mind easy, as he will call at his bankers and arrange matters for him. Indeed this friendship for Selwyn is one of the most attractive traits we have to record in the hectic character of Old Q.

Fortune may have remembered it, for Fortune was uniformly kind to him, and by another stroke, in this very year, still further improved his fortunes and position ; for during October, Charles, who had become Earl of Drumlanrig on his brother's death, died in his thirtieth year, and thus Lord March became legally heir presumptive to the Dukedom of Queensberry.

Such an advancement in prospects would, one might suppose, have brought him into closer contact than ever with the reigning Duke and his exceedingly eccentric wife, the Duchess Catherine, whose vagaries were the talk of the town and whose patronage of Gay and friendship with Pope had as much a political source as had her love of letters. But it appears that this was not the case, and beyond what prudence and kinship dictated, we are told, he does not seem to have troubled himself much about the easy-going Duke or his rather redoubtable spouse, and Amesbury saw

little of the man (much to Miss Skaite's satisfaction, no doubt) who was himself to become, in other ways, as eccentric as its *châtelaine*.

The year 1757, if not a specially successful one for Lord March so far as his racing stable was concerned, was notable for him in another direction, for it was on May 5th that he rode and won his celebrated match against the Duke of Hamilton at Newmarket. The stakes were small, only fifty guineas indeed, but the fact that two well-known peers were to be their own jockeys gave importance to the event and attracted much public attention. But although Lord March carried his mount first past the winning post the race was adjudged to the Duke of Hamilton, as his competitor "wanted half a pound to draw the scale,"¹ when he returned to the weighing room.

Lord March was again to ride one of his own horses two years later, for on May 7th, 1759 (a year in which he was more successful on the Turf than he had ever previously been) he carried his mount 'Bravo' to victory. His success was not, indeed, surprising, for in addition to having a large and well-selected stable, and giving to it so much of his personal attention, he was a remarkably fine rider, and it is confirmed that few professional jockeys excelled him in horsemanship or judgment. An anecdote, probably connected with this very race, is told of his astuteness in racing matters.

¹ Robinson.

Certain interested parties found out which of the Earl's jockeys was likely to be selected to ride the horse entered for the race, and offered the lad a large sum to lose the event. It speaks well for Lord March's relations with his servants that the boy at once went to him and revealed the whole plot. His master heard him out, and then told him to accept the offer, which he accordingly did. On the day of the race both jockey and horse appeared in the saddling paddock, when Lord March strolled up in a coat reaching down to his feet. Looking at the horse, he suddenly exclaimed, "that looks a nice animal to ride! By — I'll ride him myself." Whereupon he threw off his coat, and appeared in his racing kit; mounted, rode to the post, and won the race. No wonder the blacklegs and swindlers of the Turf were unable to get the better of such astute resource; and for the future they refrained from trying to get at his lordship's jockeys.

The reader will probably agree that sufficient has been said concerning this aspect of Lord March's character. Racing details are the dullest reading except for those whose interest in the Turf is paramount, and such are able to satisfy their curiosity by reference to the various official records of the sport which exist. It is, therefore, quite time that I turned to other points in the career of one who possessed so many interests and whose character was consequently so complex a one. I

say complex a one advisedly, because devoted to pleasure in all forms as he was, he nevertheless indulged more than once in that form of activity in which the generality of men find little or no amusement, I mean going to law. Some have thought it curious that he should have rushed into litigation so often, especially as his initial experience of it had not proved successful. But I think we can trace in this passion a form of that gambling instinct which was one of his most marked characteristics; and, therefore, such a predilection is not inconsistent with his known cautiousness and acumen in other directions.

We have seen how he lost his case against Mr. Sawyer in 1747; twelve years later he experienced another legal defeat in his attempt to claim the Earldom of Cassillis on the death of John, 8th Earl, on August 7th, 1759, without issue. Without going into the very complicated question of Lord March's claim, or of that of his competitor, Sir Thomas Kennedy, I may state that while the matter was *sub judice* the former actually assumed the title of Earl of Cassillis, which, as being an older one than that of March, he placed first, styling himself for a time Earl of Cassillis, March and Ruglen. The matter went on for no less than three years; when, on January 27th, 1762, Lord March's claim was dismissed by the House of Lords, which settled the title on Sir Thomas Kennedy. But this was not quite the end of the

matter, for although defeated as regards the Earldom, Lord March seems to have thought he had still a good claim to the estates, and it was only after further litigation that he was persuaded that both were lost causes.

The accession of George III. was in every way a satisfactory event for the Douglas family: the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry were naturally received at Court with much favour, for the King was not forgetful of their friendship with his father, Frederick Prince of Wales, and their hostility to his predecessor, George II.; and Queensberry House, in Burlington Gardens, was no longer a hot-bed of scandal and intrigue directed against St. James's. Through the restoration of the Queensberrys to Court favour Lord March benefited, and if he was hardly regarded as a *persona grata* at Buckingham House (with such a reputation as his, how could he have been?), at least his position as a peer was recognised, both at the Coronation and in other ways, and we find him being made one of the Lords of the Bedchamber to the new sovereign.

If there was one passion stronger than that for horse-racing and gambling which Lord March possessed, it was for women. All his life he had been a slave to them, and it was only in advancing years that he made them his slaves. Among the many unnamed or unremembered *hetairai* of all classes with whom he was *au mieux*, the memory

of several has survived in the memoirs and letters of the period.

Of these one of the earliest was the beautiful Italian known as 'the Rena.' We first meet with her in the correspondence of Horace Walpole who, writing to General Conway from Strawberry Hill, on September 9th, 1762, remarks: "I have had Lord March and the Rena here for one night, which does not raise my reputation in the neighbourhood, and may usher me again for a Scotchman into the North Briton."¹

The Rena seems to have exercised a strong influence over Lord March who, in spite of his many infidelities, evinced a lasting regard for her, as is proved by many references in his letters to Selwyn. It was apparently in 1762 that he first became acquainted with her, and five years later we find him still interested in her, although by that time other fair ones had shared her empire over his too susceptible heart; the Tondino, the Zamparini, the Fagniani, and many other unnamed goddesses of pleasure.

Indeed, the Tondino soon shared with the Rena the favour with which Lord March was so liberal; and as early as 1763 we find the latter telling Selwyn that "Tondino e' in collera, dicendo che la lettera non e andato subito." He even addresses another communication to his friend from

¹ He had already been attacked in that publication, on account of the favourable opinion he had expressed in his *Royal and Noble Authors*, as to the abilities of the Scots.

what he calls the Hotel de Tondino, which was no doubt the house in London he had taken for his new conquest ; and we find him remarking that he will write to the Tondino, in another letter to his friend three years later ; so that in spite of other passing fancies, he remained on friendly terms with the lady for some years.

The fact is Lord March was not one of those men who restrict their passions to a particular woman. He liked variety ; and in the same year as that in which this reference to the Tondino is made, he confesses to have taken a violent fancy to one of the opera-girls, notably the Zamparini. " This passion is a little abated," he, however, adds, " and I hope it will be quite so before you and the Rena come over, else I fear it will interrupt our society."

In spite of these *divertissements*, his regard for the Rena remained constant : " I have," he says, " a real friendship and affection for the Rena, I shall show her every mark of regard and consideration, and be vastly happy to see her. I consider her as a friend, and certainly as one that I love very much, and as such I hope she will have some indulgence for my follies. A contrary behaviour will only separate us entirely, which I should be sorry for, and upon the footing that we have lived for some time past it would be quite ridiculous and affected. You may talk to her a little about this at a distance ;" and again, a few

days later, he writes to Selwyn : " Say something for me to the Rena, that she may not think she is forgot, which she certainly is not." A month later the lady is due in England again, travelling under the protection of Selwyn, to whom Lord March writes : " Pray let me know exactly the day you are to set out, that I may secure a lodging for the Rena. I shall be very glad to see her. I hope she will have more sense than to affect any ill-humour about this opera-girl " (Zamparini). " There is no harm," he adds, " in your saying that you hear I am very fond of her, and that they have been down with me at Newmarket, which will prepare her for a hundred stories."

From a subsequent letter it would appear that Selwyn, or the Rena herself, had suggested not returning to England, in view of Lord March's infatuation for the Zamparini, for in it he says : " For God's sake do not stay one minute where you are upon any idea you may have about what will happen when you arrive. The Rena must be mad if she takes anything of this sort in a serious way. If she does there is an end of our society ; if she does not, we shall go on as we did. I am sure I have all the regard in the world for her, for I love her vastly, and I shall certainly contrive to make her as easy and happy as I can. I like this little girl, but how long this liking will last I cannot tell ; it may increase, or be quite at an end before you arrive."

These Italian charmers had a great fascination for Lord March, and as their families often accompanied them to this country, the relationship between the 'protector' and the selected beauty of the flock often partook of quite the nature of a family affair. "The Zamparini," we find Lord March telling Selwyn, for instance, "has a father, mother, and sisters, but they all like their own dirt better than anything else, so that we dine very little together. They sometimes dine here, but not often."

In the meanwhile the Tondino had flitted to Paris, but, says Lord March, "I have had a letter from her to-day" (December 23rd, 1766); and he desires 'his dear George,' to find out something that will be agreeable to the little Teresina (her Christian name); and even suggests his consulting the Rena on a suitable present, "*une jolie robe*, or anything else she likes, and let her have it from me, *pour la nouvelle année*. I would send her something from here, but you will be able to get her something that will please her better where you are." He adds that he will write two or three words to the Rena by this post. "I told her," he adds, "in my last letter, that I was supposed to be very much in love with the Zamparini, which would not prevent me from being very happy to see her. Our attachment as lovers has long been at an end, and when people live at as great a distance as we have done for some time past, it is

ridiculous to think of it ; but I have really the greatest friendship and regard for her, more than I have for anybody in the world, except yourself, and there is nothing I would not do for her. I have been too long accustomed to live with her not to like her, or to be able to forget her, and there is nothing that would give me more pain than not to be able to live with her upon a footing of great intimacy and friendship ; but I am always afraid of every event where women are concerned, they are all so exceedingly wrong-headed.”

There are, indeed, few letters of the many which Lord March wrote to Selwyn during the latter's not infrequent absences from London which do not contain some references to those *chères amies* with whom he passed so much of the time he could snatch from racing and gambling. Sometimes we find him writing from one of the numerous establishments he seems to have had in London ; and in one of these letters he desires Selwyn to purchase a dozen pairs of silk stockings for the Zamparini, of very small size, and with embroidered clocks ; and he says that he would also like to have “ some riband, a cap, or something or other for her of that sort.” . . . “ She is but fifteen,” he adds. At another time, before he broke with the Rena, he writes to Selwyn from *her* home, and in this particular letter the lady has appended the following note : “ Caro Georgino, vi prego di postarmi una di quelle piccole veste

bianche, che vi compreo la nostra vecchia per tenervi caldo la notte." ¹

The compliant George was always receiving commissions either from his friend or the mistresses of his friend, over whom he seems to have watched with a sort of parental care. Later on, with regard to another of them, his care apparently became a less unselfish one, and the Marchesa Fagniani must have been as *au mieux* with him as she was with Lord March, if he really believed that the child she bore was his own.

Although this curious circumstance is associated with some years later (1771), it may here be conveniently interpolated.

The Marchesa Fagniani with her husband had been some time domiciled in England, when Lord March was attracted by her beauty and lively disposition. That she was an Italian was in itself a recommendation to him (as in the case of the other charmers already referred to). Exactly when she and Lord March became acquainted, or under what circumstances, I have been unable to find out. But it is a fact that on August 24th, 1771, she gave birth to a girl, and that Lord March, writing from White's on the following day, acquainted Selwyn with the news, thus: "Last night Mdme. Fagniani was brought to bed. They wished it had

¹ "Dear George, I beg you to bring me one of those little white vests, which our old servant bought for you to keep you warm at night."

been a boy ; however, *cette petite princesse héritera les biens de la famille* ; so that they are all very happy. She is vastly so, to have it all over, and to find herself quite well, after having suffered a great deal, which I believe women do on these occasions, but particularly with their first child."

We shall see later that the child not only inherited (if in that direction there was anything much to inherit) the family property, but also became the heiress to both Lord March and George Selwyn, the former leaving her £150,000, as well as other property ; the latter something over £30,000 ; while her husband, Lord Yarmouth, was destined to be Lord March's (the Duke of Queensberry's) residuary legatee.

It has always been affirmed that these large bequests were made because each of the legators thought himself the father of the child. With regard to Selwyn, he never himself is known to have actually made the claim, nor is any light shed on the matter among his private papers ; and I am inclined to think that the rumour of his paternity was based only on his known deep affection for the child, an affection which might well be felt by a solitary man for an engaging young girl to whom, in the absence of anyone he cared for more (and there was no one) he might be supposed anxious to leave all he could.

There remains Lord March and Fagniani himself. Apparently the latter was quite satisfied

that he was the father ; according at least to Lord March's letter which I have quoted ; unless, of course, he was of the compliant type of husband ; and although Lord March may have been on terms of intimate relationship with the lady, there seems nothing to prove that he was Maria's father any more than was the legal husband of her mother. His huge bequests to her may well have been actuated by the same feelings as made his friend Selwyn leave her his accumulations.

The trouble is, of course, that a man with Lord March's reputation (a reputation for which, there is no gainsaying it, there were ample grounds) could not look at a woman without scandal attaching to both parties, and so the little Maria Fagniani comes down with a putative, but not an actually certain, stain on her birth.

During this period of his life Lord March, numerous as were the ladies he distinguished by his attentions, could hardly be said to have been much worse in this respect than many another titled, or untitled, libertine of the period. Lord Sandwich, the second Lord Bolingbroke, the Duke of Grafton, and not a few of the Hell Fire Club were just as bad, if not, in some respects, worse ; and it is probable that but for one circumstance his name would not have become imbued with the amatory significance it now possesses. That circumstance was the fact that, unlike others of his competitors in this direction, he stayed the whole

course, to use a racing metaphor appropriate enough in his connection, and was going as strong, or nearly as strong, during the last laps of his life's race as he had been during its initial stages. Had he died, say, before 1778 when he, at the age of 53, succeeded his cousin in the dukedom, or even ten years later, his amorous vagaries might now have been forgotten, or merely remembered in the vague way in which we call to mind those of some of his more notorious contemporaries in the race for Cupid's Cup. But he lived to become an old rake—that most unseemly and repugnant of the tribe; and what might well have been forgiven to the exuberance of youth or the still active energy of middle life, became disgraceful in one who in spite of the accumulation of years still preserved the passions of earlier days and pandered to those passions by such methods as recall the times of the Roman decadence and the still greater decadence of the *Ancien Régime*.

In the meanwhile Lord March had many qualities to which no exception could be taken, even if he already possessed some which the more decent-living of his contemporaries reprobated and condemned.

There occurred about this time (1763) that incident concerning which I have had something to say in the preceding volume, the unauthorised publication of Wilkes's *Essay on Woman*. I have accused Lord Sandwich of hypocrisy in getting up

in the House of Lords and exhibiting horror at this indecent production ; but the hypocrisy consisted not in the reprobation of such a work, but in the fact that it was expressed by one who had been a boon-companion of the author, and who, far more than he, was an outstanding member of the outrageous Hell Fire Club, whose shameless indecencies smirched even the less prominent members in a common smoky cloud of vileness. Now, the theft of a private copy of the *Essay*, and its consequent production in the House of Lords, was primarily due to a certain Revd. Mr. Kidgell, who happened to be Chaplain to Lord March, and who in a pamphlet he wrote on the matter stated that, " My Lord March was extremely offended " at the character of Wilkes's *Essay* and promised to do his utmost to bring the author to book. That a man of Lord March's character and known proclivities took up such an attitude gave the satirists plenty of points for their venom, and Lord March was associated with Lord Sandwich in a common contumely.

There was, however, no little difference in their cases ; and although it did seem an anomaly that such a rake as March should have held up the hands of horrified surprise at the work of a rake like Wilkes, it must be remembered that a man may very well be a slave to women without wishing women to be pilloried as they are in the notorious *Essay* ; and a man may equally be ready

to do things which the virtuous properly condemn, without necessarily possessing that class of mind which likes to see such matters set out in black and white, in a manner which can often clothe what is essentially natural in the meretricious trappings of indecency.

There is this also to be remembered. Lord March had never been a particular friend, far less a boon companion in unseemly revels, of Wilkes, as had Lord Sandwich ; and even if his character was not one which permitted him, without public remark, to become a *censor morum* in such a connection as the publication of the infamous *Essay on Woman*, he at least could not be accused, as Lord Sandwich was rightly accused, of indulging in licentious practices with a friend and then of turning on that friend for the sake of earning a reputation for propriety. Lord March was anything but a hypocrite, and one cannot but think that in this instance he really did feel disgust, and was not ashamed publicly to own it.



CHAPTER IV

THE DUKE OF QUEENSBERRY (*Continued*)

ALTHOUGH Lord March's activity exhibited itself in continual journeys from London to Newmarket and other centres of sport, he does not seem to have travelled much abroad, and when he did, Paris and Fontainebleau appear to have been the extent of his foreign jaunts. Although the information contained in letters is frequently interesting enough, the repetition of numerous letters themselves is seldom very exhilarating to the reader of a man's life. As a specimen of March's style of correspondence, at least one of his missives may, however, be given, and I select a letter he wrote to Selwyn from France, as an example of his epistolary manner. It is headed Fontainebleau but is undated, although it was probably written about the year 1763 :

“ My dear George,—You desire to know what I intend to do, which is more than I can tell myself, but I shall certainly be here on Sunday, and for

some days afterwards. I supped at Bruinghens the first night, the next day made my visits, but found nobody but Mother Praslin. She asked me to supper, and has sent me another card since, so that I find I am quite well there. I sup to-night with the Prince Soubise, to-morrow with Madame de Choiseul, and Monday with the Duc de Chartres ; in short, there is business for every night, and I am in no danger of being on the *pavé*. I dined to-day at what is called no dinner at Madame de Coingnies. The Queen asked Madame de Mirepoix *si elle n'avoit pas beaucoup entendu médire de Monsieur Selwyn et elle ? Elle a répondu : 'Oui, beaucoup, Madame.' 'J'en suis bien aise,' dit la Reine.* Monin will be excessively glad to see you. I have not had time to go to see him, though he is but a mile from here, and has pressed me much to come. Pray say something for me to the little Tondino, if I should not have time to write. I am not quite well this morning, and could not get up, or I should have wrote to you both. Farewell, for I must go out.—Yours, &c., &c., M. & R.

P.S.—There was no room taken for you, so I have taken the best I could get in this house, which is not a very good one, but there are lodgings enough to be had."

Few of Lord March's letters fail to contain some reference to the particular *inamorata* of the moment. The Rena, the Tondino, the Zamparini,

the Fagniani¹; and in the midst of political and social gossip, peeping between details of sport and parties of pleasure, are the attractive faces of those fair ones who occupied so much of his thought and so much of his time.

It was due no doubt to the power which these and other charmers exercised over his senses that in spite of all rumours to the contrary Lord March remained unmarried. True, he seems once seriously to have been in love lawfully and to have contemplated matrimony, but the stars in their courses were against it, and a bachelor he remained.

The circumstance which might, under other auspices, have altered many things occurred some years before the date at which we have arrived in Lord March's career. It appears that he had taken a house in Arlington Street next to that occupied by the Hon. Henry Pelham, which was No. 17, once the residence of Sir Robert Walpole and, in our own day, of Lord Yarborough. The reason for this choice was the attraction of Miss Frances Pelham. The trouble was that Mr. Pelham did not view the suitor with favour, so in order to have an easy opportunity of talking to his fair friend, he being debarred from the house, Lord March caused a bow-window to be thrown

¹ Walpole, writing to Brand, from Paris, on October 19th, 1765, mentions another lady for whom Lord March had "a passion," *Mademoiselle d'Estrées*, a daughter of the Marquis de Sillery, whom the writer, however, describes as "affected, cross and not at all handsome."

out, which commanded one of the windows of No. 17 and which thus enabled him to make love to the young lady ardently but at a discreet distance. It would seem, however, that Mr. Pelham heard of these conversations, with the result that he peremptorily forbade his daughter to hold any further intercourse with one whom he regarded, quite reasonably, as a rake of the first water.

This occurred in 1752, and two years later Pelham, who was a rather desponding and fretful person but possessed much good sense and unbounded caution, died; and it might have been expected that Lord March would then have carried out his intention of marrying Miss Pelham. Why he did not has never been explained, but it is probable that the *Rena* swam into his ken about this time, and put the idea of a legal union out of his mind. In any case he made no further efforts in that direction, and although gossip was continually uniting him in wedlock with all sorts of people for many years after, he remained all his life unattached except to those ladies of easy ethics with whom he found himself so much more at home. Indeed when, in 1764, there was a report of a union between him and Lord Hertford's daughter, Lady Anne Conway, Townshend referring to the rumour, in a letter to Selwyn, remarks, "We shall not be surprised if the report is contradicted;" which indicates the general scepticism with which such stories came to be received.

A life like that of Lord March is one in which a succession of anecdotes, interspersed with a succession of racing and gambling items, the whole overclouded by the empire of women, takes the place of those events which generally form the staple of information concerning the careers of men who have left either famous or notorious names. The fact is that few men have continued to occupy the public attention with really such limited claims to be regarded as notable as he. Though distinguished by no extraordinary talents, and with slender pretensions to be considered as an object of public interest, says one writer, he nevertheless continued to be the "observed of all observers," almost from his boyhood to extreme old age. His passions were for women and for the turf; and the sensual devotion with which he pursued this one, and the eccentricity which he displayed in the enjoyment of both, added to the observation which he attracted from his position as a man of high rank and princely fortune, rendered him an object of unceasing curiosity.¹

It is probable that hardly another man of his position and influence was so indifferent to politics. He mentions such things in his letters, but it is from the removed standpoint of a cynical and uninterested observer. He was for many years a Lord of the Bedchamber, but it was merely a decorative post; and when in 1764 he was given

¹ Jesse.

the Thistle, he received this mark of royal favour rather as a peer of wealth and position, and as heir-presumptive to a title carrying with it still greater position and wealth, than as in the most remote degree a political personage.

He framed his life, indeed, if he can ever be said to have thought much about anything except his racing stable and his harem, on the principle of endless and interchangeable pleasures—a succession of sensual delights ; a sort of apotheosis of selfishness, amid which cimmerian gloom of egotism his friendship for George Selwyn shines with perhaps fuller lustre because of the antithesis it formed to his cynical relations with most of those with whom he came in contact. Even the apparent care he exhibits in his letters to do pleasant things for the girls he kept has in it a substratum of the selfishness of the voluptuary who is ever anxious to be well with those who might otherwise not administer so adequately to his pleasures.

As he advanced in life he became in this respect worse ; and the more amiable impulses of youth were gradually absorbed in the egotistical perversions of age ; in a word the complete sensualist was springing fully developed from the natural hot and feverish passions of early manhood. It was, however, as I have already remarked, this very continuance and development of such instincts, unbridled by fear of public opinion and

unshackled by want of means, that has caused the name of March (or rather one should say of Old Q) to occupy so curiously large a space in the annals of the day, and to bulk extensively in the history of the country to whose making he brought no genius and for whose welfare he took no trouble. There are among the incidents of his life several which are hardly likely to raise one's opinion of his character apart from such circumstances as are connected with his amatory exploits. As we have seen in a previous volume, doubts were thrown on the courage of the Earl of Rochester, and such doubts are equally present in the case of the Earl of March. An incident in point I have already recorded ; where in order to avoid a duel he made an unqualified apology. In that case the eccentric behaviour of his would-be adversary might perhaps be adduced in extenuation of Lord March's attitude ; but that he should permit anyone actually to pull his ear without resenting it betrays a cowardice for which there is no excuse. Such an incident, however, did occur.

It appears that he was on one occasion playing cards at a resort of ill-repute in St. James's Street, known as Renny's ' hell.' During the game a dispute arose between him and a well known *habitué* of the place, called ' Savage ' Roche—an Irishman of violent temper and great physical strength. Lord March, during the altercation, flatly contradicted something the Hibernian had said, where-

upon the latter incontinently took him by the ears and lifted him bodily out of his chair, and held him thus in mid-air to the laughter and derision of the whole room : remarking " See, gentlemen, how I treat this contemptuous little cock-sparrow. As a man he is too much beneath me, or I would treat him as a gentleman." It seems almost inconceivable that any man could pocket such an affront, and yet we are told by one who is always ready to excuse Lord March on the slightest pretext,¹ that he did so.

An incident which occurred at Paris seems to indicate another curious twist in Lord March's character, to give it no worse a construction. It appears that Lord Holland had lost money to a certain sharper called Affligio (a curiously appropriate name or *nom de guerre* for his opponent at any rate) and Lord March chose to champion the foreign gentleman. The victim, writing to Selwyn on July 19th, 1765, refers to the circumstance thus : " as to Lord March, I believe him to be a man of as much honour as any man, but everyone who was at Paris lays the playing of Affligio to his door, and I hear his lordship still defends him," and he adds, " God forbid I should suspect any ill designs, upon my honour I do not ; but I have no patience with such a *travers*, as there must be in his way of thinking, who can doubt of Affligio being a sharper."

¹ Robinson.

There is no reason to suppose from this that Lord March with all his failings was not as honest himself in his gambling transactions as he was on the Turf, but he was one of those men who take up an attitude and stick to it, even after they have had proof of the incorrectness of their opinions ; and *pace* Lord Holland he may really have been persuaded of Affligio's honesty ; the man's name, if not an assumed one, indicates that he was an Italian, and that fact alone would have been sufficient to enlist Lord March in his favour.

From the Selwyn correspondence all sorts of side lights are thrown on Lord March's doings during these years, for it was to his friend that he told more than he told anyone else, and so much which reveals the better, and sometimes the worse, side of his character. His racing and gambling gains and losses ; his movements with his *chères amies*, who were so often placed, during their journeys to and from the continent, under ' dear George's ' care ; how he sups, one night with the Duke of York *en parti fin*, with some of the opera girls ; how he has received a civil letter from Monsieur du Barri, or has won four thousand guineas at Newmarket ; sometimes even accounts (but they are rare) of doings and sayings in the House of Lords. In one letter he tells his friend that he has two fans for him, a present from a lady friend ; in another he thanks him for a muff which he likes ' prodigiously ' ; and so forth ; quite small beer no doubt

but suggestive of a mind alert for the *agréments* of life in all their manifestations. But chiefly are the letters interesting for those references to the Rena, the Tondino, and others, with whom he passed so much of his time and whose absences he not infrequently bewails with what seems like a real sorrow ; as when the Tondino is leaving England and the amorous Earl cries to his friend, "how shall I be able to part with her, or bear to come back to this house, I do not know. The sound of her voice fills my eyes with fresh tears. My dear George, *j'ai le cœur si serré que je ne suis bon a présent qu'à pleurer.*" It is quite pathetic, and at least indicates that the entirely selfish voluptuary of later years had not yet begun to throw off the better feelings of earlier days.

The Selwyn correspondence incidentally indicates that it was some time in 1766 that Lord March gave up his house in Arlington Street and removed to one in Seamore Place ; as from that time onwards until he settled in Piccadilly his letters are addressed from this new abode.

It was towards the end of this year that he was first attracted by the charms of the Zamparini who, from the picture we have of her, must have been a singularly fascinating creature. She was one of those 'opera girls' with whom he delighted to consort and who were able to minister to his passion for female beauty, and also for music, of which he possessed more than a common know-



in the Character

LA ZAMPERINI.

(face p. 74)

ledge together with some skill as a singer and a performer on the harpsichord himself. Lord March was, indeed, one of the most assiduous frequenters of the *coulisses* of the opera, and was for many years one of those noble patrons of it and the drama, and it is rather difficult to say which had the greater attraction for him, the performers or the performance. In his case there is perhaps not very much doubt, but there is no denying the fact that the concord of sweet sounds was for much in his devotion, if the concourse of sweet faces was more.

That the Zamparini had made a complete conquest of the amorous peer is proved by various remarks in his letters to Selwyn ; he even took her to Newmarket with him, and not only the young lady herself but her family ; although he took care to travel in his chaise with his new *inamorata*, with " the rest in the old landau," following. At the same time he had by no means broken with the Rena : " I have," he writes, " intended a thousand times to have wrote to the Rena ; something or other, however, has always prevented me, but I certainly will write by this post." " I would not for the world," he adds, " give her any mortification, for I really love her very much, and it is for that reason that I wish her not to come here just now. Pray, say something to her for me for not writing, which I certainly should not have put off so long if I had not always said something about her in my letters to you.

Contrive anything rather than she should appear to be neglected."

This message was sent to Selwyn who appears again to have been in Paris at this moment ; and in the letter in which the passage occurs, we find Lord March desiring his friend to send him some Chambertin—" the best you can . . . and you may give any price for it." Later, he asks his friend to procure him some gloves—" the kind I bought at Dulais . . . they are lined with a kind of wash-leather ;" while in return we find him sending Selwyn some tea and a number of fans, of which latter George, one supposes, was a collector, unless he was making presents of them to all his lady friends in Paris.

Lord March, who was himself a not infrequent visitor to the French capital, has many messages to send to his acquaintances there, and all sorts of news to receive concerning them. It is gossip that has for us, to-day, but a feeble interest ; brief references to the society of Paris and Versailles, bits of scandal, news as to political appointments, the personal touches which linked up the high society of the two nations, the *dissecta membra* of a life which is as dead as that of the Pharaohs, but which can be revived for a moment by a phrase and galvanized into momentary activity by a sentence.

In the meanwhile Lord March's interest in the Turf suffered no abatement, and in spite of a want

of success sadly out of proportion with his efforts (in 1766 he only won three events out of fourteen), nothing damped his ardour in this respect, and he even made his amatory escapades subservient to his love of horse-flesh. His journeyings between London and Newmarket alone must have occupied no little of his time, and were, perhaps, on the whole the best hours he passed in his rather feverish pursuits of varied enjoyment.

It is a curious fact that in spite of his growing reputation for fast living, and his general neglect of politics, he seems to have been regarded at a Court which was proverbially strict as a man to be honoured. As we have seen, the Thistle had been given him, and in 1766 we find him receiving a further honour in being made Vice-Admiral of Scotland, a post one might have thought curiously alien from his tastes and predilections, were it not known to have been one of those decorative offices which, possessing a maritime title, requires no knowledge of seamanship or of maritime matters. As a Lord of the Bedchamber, too, he was in constant intercourse with the Farmer King, who seems, somehow, to have come to have a liking for the reprobate, rather remarkable in one who found the vagaries of others (his own son among them) little to his taste. One always thinks of George III. as he was in later days, and his long life has swallowed up his passion for Hannah Lightfoot and his more restrained admiration for Lady Sarah Lennox.

We always regard him as a mature homely person, given to repeating his remarks, and fond of taking tea with 'dear Mrs. Delany.' But in 1766 he was yet a young man, as the rather redoubtable Queen Charlotte was a young woman, and no doubt he was capable of being as much amused by Lord March's stories as we know he was by George Selwyn's wit.

Nor is it only in respect of great personages that our ideas are impregnated by later knowledge, and are thus apt to be biassed unwittingly. The conditions obtaining on the Turf to-day are very different from what they were when Lord March was one of its protagonists. Certain of those 'events' which time has caused to become classic were not even in existence; the Derby was not inaugurated till 1780, the Oaks till 1779; nor were the Two Thousand Guineas, and many other now famous races, then known. The Jockey Club, which has done so much to keep racing 'straight,' was then but a tentative club, meeting rather fortuitously at the Star and Garter Tavern in Pall Mall, where the first Cricket Club was also to assemble in 1774, and Selwyn's Thursday Club, famous for its whist and its interchange of wit; and there is no doubt that it was due to the exertions of such men as the Duke of Cumberland, the Duke of Grafton, the Earls of March, Barrymore, and Clermont, together with the efforts of later *devotés* of racing, that the sport was systematized

on that sound basis on which, in spite of contretemps and occasional scandals, it now stands.¹

It was in 1770 that Lord March may be said really to have applied himself with thoroughness and determination to racing. For several years before this he had been occupied in setting his stable in order ; weeding out and adding, by the light of the intimate and peculiar knowledge he had by then gained of the science ; and for nearly another thirty years he may be regarded as one of the most inveterate and, on the whole, successful followers of the pursuit.

The extract I have previously given from *The Virginians* indicates Lord March's propensity to lay wagers on anything, from the date of his own marriage (which never took place) to that of the death of a friend or the duration of a ministry. It was an age of such things, as the betting books of White's and Brooks's and other sources amply testify. Bets were made on everything under the sun, and curious stories are related concerning such wagers, as how on one occasion a man having fallen down in a fit and the question of his life or death being made the subject of one, those interested objected to a doctor being called as likely to invalidate the issue ; and how on another, some young men at one of the clubs on a rainy day were

¹ In this connection it is interesting to remember that Tattersalls was founded by Richard Tattersall in 1766. It is generally supposed that it was first opened in its original quarters at Hyde Park Corner, in 1773, but I am inclined to think it was earlier.

found laying the odds on two drops of water running down the window pane, only to be confounded by their merging into one before they had reached the winning post at the bottom of the pane of glass !

Lord March was, as we have seen, one of those men who were always ready to lay or take such wagers, and his native shrewdness generally stood him in good stead in such gambling encounters. There were occasions, however, when no amount of acumen was effective against chance, and a curious instance is given of one of these.

It appears that Lord March had laid a wager with Mr. Pigot, to the amount of five hundred guineas, that old Mr. Pigot would die before Sir William Codrington. Now it so happened that on the very day on which the wager was laid Mr. Pigot senior died suddenly from gout in the head ; a fact, of course, unknown to either party to the bet. Lord March thereupon claimed the payment of the amount he had staked. But Mr. Pigot objected, basing his contention on the recognised turf condition that if a horse dies before the race he is entered for, the bets on it are called off. Lord March would not recognise this analogy, and, after much discussion, brought an action in the King's Bench against his opponent for the amount. The case was tried before Lord Mansfield, and after the hearing of a great number of witnesses, expert and other, a verdict was returned for the

plaintiff. Lord March is said to have been accommodated with a seat on the bench, and to have there sat calm and unruffled awaiting the result, of whose issue in his favour he does not seem to have had a moment's doubt.

In spite of its proved legality the attitude taken up by Lord March with regard to this transaction is not a particularly pleasant one, and one may, I think, trace a connection between it and the fact that it was during this year that he was black-balled both at Boodle's and at Almack's. He was a member of White's and Brooks's, and therefore his rejection by Boodle's did not probably greatly affect him; but it must have come as no little surprise to him that his claims to being "a pretty gentleman *du premier ordre*" as Mrs. Boscawen terms him,¹ were not found sufficient to over-ride his reputation, or want of it, in the direction of that most select of assemblies, Almack's. The ways of Almack's were proverbially erratic, but why the line should have been drawn at Lord March, whose name occurs constantly in the records of notable and exclusive gatherings, is curious, unless, as I have supposed, this taking advantage of a tragedy in order to make money was regarded as a little too 'steep' even for the easy-going manners of the *ton* of the period.

An extract from one of Mrs. Delany's letters, about this period (September 2nd, 1768), indicates

¹ In a letter to Mrs. Delany.

that Lord March was *galant* in other company besides that of actresses and opera-dancers. "Lady Harrington and her daughter, Bell," writes Mrs. Delany to Miss Dewes, "have had a quarrel. Lord March, it seems, is a great favourite of Lady Bell's. When he went away t'other day after paying a visit, Lady Harrington said, 'I am glad he is gone, a frightful old fellow.' Lady Bell took his part, on which Lady Harrington said, 'I suppose he trod on your toes.' 'No, Madam, not on mine, but I know he has on yours.' "

It is a curious fact that when one of the perennial matrimonial reports concerning Lord March was, not long after, circulated, the lady associated with him in the matter was another of Lady Harrington's daughters, Lady Henrietta Stanhope. That there was nothing in it did not prevent the poetasters of the day from producing the usual scurrilous verses with which such anticipated alliances were not infrequently heralded. I have already quoted the opening verse on a previous page, and three others may be given out of the remaining five, although the two penultimate ones will hardly bear the fierce light that beats upon cold print:

"Consult the equestrian bard wise Chiron Beaver,
Or Dr. Helier's learned sybil leaves,
And they, true members of the *savoir-vivre*,¹
Will tell the wondrous things that love receives.

¹ A name once given to Boodle's.

Why in the spavin of your days, sweet sir,
Attempt to draw on *Cupid's* little boot ?
Let Jockey Grosvenor's fate, alas ! deter ;
Ah ! think, Newmarket Lord, what things may sprout !

Stick to the Jockey Club, attend your bard,
Nor ever think of dancing love's cotillon ;
For Ligonier, who galloped quite as hard,
Was doubly distanced by his own postillion."

Such effusions seem pointless enough to-day, except where a *double-entendre* is obvious ; but those conversant with the more recondite annals of the period in which they were written will not be at a loss to understand the covert allusions to illustrious people, and others in no way illustrious, contained in them.

Meanwhile Lord March, undisturbed by rumours or scandal, continued his career of pleasure and, so far as the racing portion of it was concerned, profit. For on the whole he did very well on the Turf, especially in 1771, when he pocketed three thousand pounds in stakes alone ; and in 1776, when, out of forty-two engagements he won twenty-two and benefited to the amount of nearly four thousand pounds in stakes. What he gained by betting must have been very large, especially as he was an adept in making wagers of a ' sound ' character, based on an amount of shrewdness only equalled by his intimate knowledge of all matters concerned with horses and their riders.

A reference to the Racing Calendar will reveal the fact that from the year 1777 onwards his

horses were consistently successful, and one may, I think, attribute this to the fact that it was in that year that Dick Goodison, or Hellfire Dick, as he was called on the Turf, first entered his service.

This jockey was a master of the art of getting his horses first away from the starting place, and even more of lifting them, so to phrase it, past the winning post. In such respects he was a masterly rider, knowing how and when to nurse his mount, and when to get every ounce of go out of it. Indeed there were points of comparison in this respect between him and Fred Archer ; and it was doubtless due to his own excellent judgment and sound horsemanship that he was able to tool so many of his patron's animals to victory, and to influence other jockeys who carried Lord March's colours. For many years he served Lord March, or the Duke of Queensberry as he was on the point of becoming, well and faithfully.

I have indicated the change in Lord March's title which was now imminent. In July 1777, the famous Kitty, Duchess of Queensberry, died, from eating too many cherries, in Saville Row ; and on October 22nd of the following year the old Duke followed his eccentric spouse to the grave ; to be succeeded by his cousin, the Earl of March, who thus became the fourth and last Duke of Queensberry, of the peerage, and the ' Old Q ' of a hundred hectic stories, and an hundred well—and as often ill—founded scandals.



CHAPTER V

THE DUKE OF QUEENSBERRY (*Continued*)

WITH Lord March's accession to the dukedom a new era in his life opens, although it cannot be said that his habits underwent any marked alteration. He had always had plenty of money, although his expenses were so great as often to be a heavy strain on such resources. But as heir to one of the richest estates in the kingdom he had had little difficulty in commanding the use of ready cash ; and he now but passed from potential to actual wealth.

For many years he had exchanged his residence in Seamore Place for that house (No. 138 it is now) in Piccadilly with which his name and notoriety are so indissolubly connected ; and he had, therefore, no use for the late Duke's abode in Burlington Gardens, that beautiful building which had originally been built by Leoni in 1726. Miss Mary Townshend, whose people lived close by, writing to Selwyn on November 5th, 1778, expresses some anxiety as to what will happen to old Queensberry House. " I am curious," she says, " to hear what

the new Duke of Queensberry will do with his house over against us. His own is so much pleasanter, both as to prospect and disposition of the rooms, that I do not suppose he will live in it himself, and I feel a little interest that he should not, as there would be brick and mortar without end."

As a matter of fact the Duke did elect to remain in Piccadilly, where he put a new front to his house, and added a flight of steps to the pavement from the first floor rooms, which was all the building, *pace* Miss Townshend's fears, in which he appears to have indulged. Queensberry House afterwards became the property of the Earl of Uxbridge, and was re-christened after his name; it was rebuilt by the younger Vardy in 1792. Prior's Kitty, and her *protégé*, John Gay, both died in the old Queensberry House.

The Duke of Queensberry, as Lord March must henceforth be called, now found himself confronted with many matters which must have sadly interrupted his pleasures but on which his succession to the title made his attention incumbent. No doubt he bore them with equanimity, for they were at least associated with increased wealth and prestige, and if there was one thing he loved more than actual pleasure it was money.

For almost, if not quite, the first time since he had left Scotland as a young man he was obliged to make a journey to the northern kingdom, in

order to investigate the position of affairs at Drumlanrig and other estates which he had inherited. We hear of him making short work of a number of old horses which during his cousin's reign had been pensioned off, so to term it, and were indulging in an *otium cum dignitate* which he thus rather cruelly disturbed. One supposes, too, that he made arrangements for this princely seat to be placed on a different footing from what it had been during the late Duke's time; for the picturesqueness of Scotland appealed little to him compared with the pleasures of London, which he found essential; and Piccadilly was ever the most attractive spot to one who became bored even with the constant flow of the Thames.

However, he must have been at Drumlanrig again in the following year, still no doubt occupied with putting that house and other cognate matters in order, for he communicates thence with Selwyn, on September the 8th, 1779. This letter, which was not written by himself but by a certain Alexander Crauford on his behalf, is interesting because it indicates that the new Duke did, at least for a time, occupy himself with political matters, a subject from which he was, on the whole, curiously averse. *Noblesse oblige*, however, and even Old Q seems to have felt the force of the motto on this occasion. Crauford tells Selwyn that the Duke, "has been engaged in a variety of business, and what is more material for you to know, he has

preserved his health and spirits surprisingly." Old Q was always more or less of a valetudinarian, and there are indications throughout his correspondence not only of the care he bestowed on his own health but recommendations to his friends how best to preserve theirs. It is a trait common enough with those who pursue pleasure with avidity, and dislike those, on whom they are dependent for amusement, being ill almost as much as being ill themselves.

But it was not for this that I referred specially to this letter ; my reason will appear in the following extract, which shows, as I have said, the Duke of Queensberry interesting himself in something beyond women and racing :

" When the Duke came into this country, he found that there had been two very ineffectual meetings of the gentlemen of the county, called together for the purpose of supporting government as far as their abilities would admit ; but, like most other assemblies of that kind, they broke up without determining on anything. Soon after his arrival he had a meeting of the county again called, and laid before them in a very masterly manner a proposal, in which he was seconded by Lord Stormont, and carried unanimously. Upon this a subscription was opened, to which the Duke put down his name for three hundred pounds, and Lord Stormont put down his for one hundred, and all the gentlemen belonging to the county, who were

present, subscribed handsomely. The meeting was said to be fuller than any they had had in the county for a long time ; and so great is the ardour of the people to sign the association paper, which I enclose, that there are above four hundred who have already put their names to it. By far the greater number are the Duke's tenants, and it seemed to be the opinion of the gentlemen in general, that he might get a thousand people to follow him whithersoever he might think it necessary to lead them. The result of the meeting, and the proposal as it now stands, are sent up to town to be laid before the King, and His Majesty's answer is expected next week."

Having thus seen his northern estate, and placed himself as a man of leading among his tenants and neighbours who, no doubt, imagined him to be far more versed and interested in politics than was the case, the Duke, later in the year, made a journey to Amesbury, that mansion in Wiltshire where his eccentric relative Catherine, Duchess of Queensberry, had passed so much of her time with her easy-going duke. But the place does not seem to have appealed to him at all ; and he probably went there merely to see what furniture he might care to remove. Certainly he cared not at all to live so far from London, and during his lifetime the house was first left to itself and its caretaker, and later was actually stripped of many of its most valuable and artistic contents. He is known, however,

during the earlier years of his dukedom, occasionally to have gone down to Amesbury, as he tells Selwyn, by a letter dated August 31st, 1780, from Becket, where he was then staying, that Charles Fox had dined with him there on the previous Tuesday.

This letter is a very short one. Indeed the Duke, who never was fond of letter-writing, had got into the way of using amanuenses even in his correspondence with Selwyn, and pressed into his service Crauford and others, among whom was the Rev. Dr. Warner, from whose missives many sidelights are thrown on his grace's character.

I am inclined to think that little 'Mie Mie' Fagniani acted as a sort of bone of contention between the friends at this period. The Duke had a kindness (as Dr. Johnson might have expressed it) for the child; but it was anything but the paternal affection Selwyn exhibited, an affection that appears to have irritated his friend in no small way. Warner remarks on one occasion that the Duke "scarcely ever fails to offend my feelings," and he proceeds to illustrate this by adding, "There was a tenderness in your letter about Mie Mie, and the little flannel petticoat which had covered her elegant proportions, and had done you good, with which he ought to have been pleased, but which he treated with a pish and a damn;" "I do not know," he goes on to say, "what he may do from whim, or from not knowing what else to

do, but I cannot conceive he will do much from sentiment or rectitude. Surely, sir, when you conceived so much friendship for him, which continues from habitude, the man (if I ought to call him so, first on account of his great nobility, and secondly on account of his no less frivolity), must have been very different from what I have ever seen him. But, however, be he as he may, I am sure he loves you as much or more than he does anybody, and therefore you ought to continue to love him, and I hope will forgive me when I blurt out, in my blunt way, anything which I think I see improper in him, and which at present may arise as much from a pride in myself which may not become me, as from zeal to you."

In this letter that *ennui* which grew on the Duke with years, and made his innate selfishness daily more marked, is indicated by one who had plenty of opportunities for studying his character; and, indeed, we can see that Dr. Warner was quite alive to the shortcomings of a man with whom he was, for a time, thrown much in contact, and whose vagaries he is never tired of criticising. There is no doubt that with his accession to the Dukedom and immense wealth, a kind of boredom fastened on Old Q. With a title and estates to be inherited there was something to look forward to, and for a few years after the event had happened there was a certain novelty in the position. But it soon wore off, and there remained the voluptuary

who found his best years slipping by, and who cast about in all directions for some new sensation with which to defeat the course of time and the *ennui* of the passing moment.

True, he had his racing stable and his perpetual wagers on every conceivable thing to help him through the day ; but these became monotonous ; he had, too, his *chères amies*, but they became exacting, although, to be sure, they never quite failed (by constant change) to pander to his sensuality and to excite his ever-green interest in such things. And yet with all this boredom, he possessed what Matthew Arnold has termed an almost bloodthirsty clinging to life. He was, or thought himself, always ill ; he had his body physician in constant attendance ; he rushed off to Bath or Tunbridge Wells at the least signs of something wrong with his constitution ; and, like so many selfish people, he was ever recording his *malaises* or complaining of them to his acquaintances. He was a man who had inherited or acquired titles and honours which might have seemed to fulfil the desires of the most exacting, and because he possessed them they turned to dust and ashes in his mouth. He owned estates all over the country ; but he disregarded one because it was too far away ; another because it was too dull. Indeed he was never happy unless he was within sound of Piccadilly, even if he could be called happy then.



OLD Q-U-I-Z
the old GOAT of Piccadilly.

A Shining Star in the British Peerage
And a useful Ornament to Society. — Fudge.

LONDON: Printed by J. DODD, in Pall-mall.

THE DUKE OF QUEENSBERRY
(BY DIGHTON).

(see p. 92)

But London cannot be lived in all the year round even by a duke who might be supposed able to keep a few satellites with him during the off season ; and so Old Q looked about for some place close at hand where he could have London's society and be in touch with London itself. He found something to his liking at Richmond, where there then stood a mansion on the banks of the river, which had been erected by the 3rd Earl of Cholmondeley in 1708, and which on the death of Lady Cowper, its last owner, was in the market. This property he purchased, in 1780, and proceeded to alter, and reconstruct to his taste. Hither he removed the gallery of old pictures from Amesbury, a gallery that included some famous Vandycks that had once belonged to the great Clarendon, from whom the Duchess Catherine had been descended. These masterpieces were hung up in the entrance hall, and elsewhere were a series of portraits of legal celebrities which had once also been owned by the Lord Chancellor.

The house was built of red brick, and had a balcony running along its whole frontage on the first floor ; the ground floor was of stone and contained few if any rooms, no doubt being so constructed in order to avoid the damage then frequently done by high tides, as for instance in 1774, when the river is known to have risen no less than ten feet above ordinary level.

Here Old Q came during the summer months

when even his beloved Piccadilly had grown too dusty and deserted to attract him. Some years after he had been domiciled here, Horace Walpole paid a visit to the place : " I went yesterday," he writes, " to see the Duke of Queensberry's palace at Richmond, under the conduct of George Selwyn, the *concièrge*. You cannot imagine how noble it looks now all the Cornbury pictures from Amesbury are hung up there. The great hall, the great gallery, the eating room, and the corridor, are covered with whole or half lengths of the royal family, favourites, ministers, peers, and judges of the reign of Charles I. . . . and the house is so handsome, and the views so rich, and the day was so fine, that I could only have been more pleased if (for half an hour) I could have seen the real palace that once stood on that spot, and the persons represented, walking about."

It was at Queensberry House, as it was now called, that the Duke, standing on the balcony with some friends, gazing at the river, made his famous remark : " What is there to make so much of in the Thames? I am quite weary of it; there it goes, flow, flow, flow, always the same." ¹

Among these friends were no doubt some of the very distinguished members of the Richmond society of those days : the Penns, the Onslows, the Douglasses, the Keenes, Lady Mount-Edgcombe, Lady Diana Beauclerk, and Horace Walpole from

¹ The story is given in the *Life* of Wilberforce.

Strawberry Hill. Richmond was in those times an ultra-fashionable suburb. Besides its natural amenities it had its small but famous theatre, first opened in 1766, where all sorts of illustrious histrions have appeared, including Mrs. Jordan, and Edmund Kean who died in it. Royalty, too, much affected the place, coming over from Kew Palace and even (in the person of the Duke of Clarence, afterwards William IV.) residing in the little town itself. In fact Old Q while here could count on having about him much of the society with which he was familiar in London ; and that was far more to him than the beauty of the river (with which he became so bored) or the picturesqueness of the Park, into whose recesses he probably seldom if ever penetrated. *Urbs in rure* was his version of the phrase ; and he lived up to it, as those with unlimited wealth and many parasites, if not many real friends, can generally do, if they like.

Selwyn was a kind of standing dish at Queensberry House (Walpole humorously calls him the *concièrge*, as we have seen), and where he and Old Q were, one may be sure that Mie Mie was not far off. But there is no doubt that besides these respectable guests and the neighbours of light and leading there were others who came to stay here with the ducal host who may certainly be termed light, if not exactly leading.

The fabric of old Queensberry House has long since disappeared, for about 1831 Sir William

Dundas built another house on its site, using much of the materials of Old Q's palace for that purpose, but if its walls could have spoken, some curious stories would, one feels sure, have been heard about the old profligate and his opera-dancers and others ; and if he never emulated here the classic *poses plastiques* of his Piccadilly mansion, he was quite capable of investing the story of the biblical young lady and the elders, by scenes in which one elder and several young ladies (of anything but a biblical character) disported themselves. The friend of the notorious Duc de Chartres (the 'Egalité' of the Revolution) and the intimate of so many of the decadent nobility of the *ancien régime*, was sufficiently familiar with such things as were carried on in Paris during that shameless period, not (or so one imagines) to have practised much the same in the discreet retirement of Richmond or the still more unsophisticated recesses of Amesbury, when he could bring himself to make so far flung a journey from his beloved Piccadilly. When a man has shown himself capable of anything, one may be forgiven for attributing to him things for which no actual evidence is forthcoming.

The mention of the Duc de Chartres comes in not inaptly here, for, as most people know, he was as great a *dévoité* of the Turf as was George, Prince of Wales (with whom he was at one time on terms of friendship), or even the Duke of Queensberry

himself ; and as we find the latter, in 1783, sending horses to race in France, it is more than probable that he did so at the instigation of the French royal duke. There appears to be no record as to what, if any, success Old Q met with at Longchamps or Chantilly or wherever his horses raced in France ; nor do we know if this initial experiment was continued or not. But in this connection, generally, it is interesting to find that in the previous year he won, with his horse Guido, the *Revolution* stakes at Newmarket.

Although the Duke had purchased the Richmond house in 1780 it was several years before he was more or less established there, as he seems to have indulged in alterations and improvements there in a quite unwonted manner ; for, unlike the Duke of Chandos, he never seems to have had a special mania for bricks and mortar. As we have seen, Walpole first went over Queensberry House in 1786, and it was probably not long before that date that the owner began regularly to visit the place and to receive there his friends in the neighbourhood, although he may possibly have had as visitors somewhat before this those more intimate companions of both sexes with whom he was generally surrounded. I may state, parenthetically, that it was in this year (1786) that he was created an English peer, by the title of Baron Douglas of Amesbury, and so was entitled to take his seat for the first time in the House of

Lords. There is no doubt that had his reputation been a cleaner one this distinction would have been conferred on him at a much earlier period, and would probably have taken the form of a higher rank.

It is a curious coincidence that the Vannecks, who were the Duke's next door neighbours in Piccadilly, at No. 139, also had a house at Richmond, as it was for the hand of Miss Gertrude Vanneck that Old Q made a proposal to her father Sir Joshua on, it is said, three separate occasions. However tempting the thought of being a future Duchess might have proved, Miss Vanneck could not bring herself to accept the hand of the old rake, who had to console himself with ladies of less respectability and less squeamishness.

Among the visitors at Queensberry House were the Prince of Wales and Mrs. Fitzherbert; while the Duke of Clarence, who was renting a house elsewhere in Richmond for Mrs. Jordan, was also constantly coming to see the Duke, and once, at least, asked him to put up some of his horses in the Queensberry House stables, a request with which Old Q did not choose to comply.

When the Revolution broke out in France many of the *émigrés* from that country settled in Richmond; and the Duke, who loved the society of foreigners, was wont to throw open his house twice a week to such of them as chose to come. Indeed he appears in the pleasantest light in connection

with these unfortunate people, and for their amusement he arranged with the management of the Opera and the two theatres, to pay for seats for which his vouchers were to be good ; and he was accustomed to ask his guests if any of them would care to go to the opera or the play, as he was anxious to exercise his privilege of giving free seats, leading them to suppose that he possessed the right of doing so without payment. It need hardly be said that the emigrants were not slow to take advantage of the hospitality of a man whom many of them had met during happier times in Paris, and who possessed those manners of the *vieille cour* with which they were all imbued.

From Selwyn's letters one can learn the names of some of those who were welcome and delighted guests at Queensberry House : Madame de Boufflers, and Calonne, the Comte and Comtesse de Suffren, the Comtesse Balbi, and the rest. The last named once gave a return party at the Castle Inn at Richmond, of which Selwyn has left a record and to which he and 'Mie Mie' were, of course, invited.

In addition to the members of the *haute noblesse*, others of a less commanding station must have often received the hospitality of Queensberry House, as we know they did of 138 Piccadilly. The Duke loved music and had the best box at the Opera House, in the Haymarket, and he loved the ladies who sang ; and if they were French or

Italian, as they generally were, he loved them more. Thus it was that he came to be regarded as the outstanding patron of foreign vocal talent, the exponents of which were certain of a friendly reception at any place where he happened to be in residence. He organised regular concerts at 138 Piccadilly, and thither many went who professed horror at their host's reputation but could not withstand the artistic, and even more material, fare provided for them.

At an earlier day we find Lady Mary Coke in her Journal,¹ referring to the mansion which then (1768) the Duke had but recently acquired: "The house," she writes, "is very fine and fitted up with a great deal of taste. There were three and twenty people; the Duchess of Grafton, the Duchess of Hamilton, the Duchess of Buccleuch, Lady Coventry, Lady Essex, Mrs. Fitzroy, Mrs. Pitt and Lady Susan Stewart. The rest were men. The supper was fine, but not tedious. When it was over there was music, and five couples danced. . . . At a quarter after one o'clock, the Duchess of Buccleuch and I called for our chairs, and all the party seemed breaking up." Selwyn also mentions similar entertainments in these gilded and beautified rooms, where the company was waited on by the servants in their green and silver liveries, and ate of the good things provided by the *chef* at ninety guineas a year.

¹ Privately printed in 4 volumes.

It may be wondered at that a man who had earned such a reputation as Old Q should have been able to induce some of those mentioned in Lady Mary's list to come to his house. But this was before the rake had become an *old* rake, which makes a good deal of difference ; and besides, many of these ladies (and ladies, it must be remembered, were not so particular then) were not supposed to know much that they did know—and, well, music covers a multitude of sins ; even, in our days it has been successful in overcoming class prejudices to a quite remarkable degree, as most people are aware. I don't suggest for a moment that Old Q merely assumed an interest in it as some climbing hostesses have done at a later time ; he was far too great a *seigneur* for that : he really loved it for itself, and was always happy when surrounded by those who did the same, or by those who were able to minister to his pleasure and that of his guests.

It was in 1787 (to return for a moment to those racing matters which occupied, in spite of music and opera girls, so much of the Duke's time) that his chief jockey engaged Chifney to ride for him, and one can never mention the name of Chifney without recalling his association with the Prince of Wales ; and this leads by an easy transition to Old Q's connection with the Heir Apparent. On what exact terms they stood it is difficult to define. That their relations were not specially close seems

obvious from the fact that the Duke was, till the year 1789, one of the gentlemen of the King's bed-chamber. In that year, however, there were unmistakeable signs of a development of that madness with which George III. became intermittently affected, and which finally clouded the end of his long life. Old Q by personal enquiries (he even journeyed specially to Windsor for that purpose) came to the conclusion that all hopes of the sovereign's ultimate recovery were past ; and on that he determined to pay his court to the Prince. The latter received him graciously and went frequently to confer with him in Piccadilly, where copious draughts of champagne, then something of a novelty, lubricated their discussions ; while the two were seen hob-nobbing together at York Races in the August of this very year. In fact the Duke openly identified himself with the rising sun, and no doubt supposed that he would benefit by the warmth of its meridian rays. Unfortunately the King recovered, and with his restoration to health all those who had shewn their hands by their attitude towards his much disliked heir felt the full force of his resentment. Old Q had not much to lose, certainly ; but of what he had—his post as Gentleman of the Bedchamber—he was incontinently deprived. It would seem, however, that this step was rather the work of Queen Charlotte (who could not have approved of his way of life as she did not approve of that of her eldest son)

and Pitt, and was, in the latter's case, more political than personal, for the King seems to have remained on friendly terms with the Duke in spite of the haste with which he had transferred his allegiance to his son. The post which Old Q forfeited was worth £1000 a year, and although he was so rich a man as not to feel such a relatively small diminution of his income, he was always so fond of money, and so seldom seems to have spent it unless it was for the gratification of himself, that it is probable that the loss of his office annoyed him (if he was not by now too *blasé* to be annoyed at anything) chiefly because it meant the loss of its accompanying emolument.



CHAPTER VI

THE DUKE OF QUEENSBERRY (*Continued*)

IHAVE said that George III. does not appear to have resented Old Q's attitude in regard to his illness, in a personal way. Many will, perhaps, wonder at this, in view of the unenviable notoriety of the duke and the strict ideas of propriety held by the king ; but Old Q knew well enough how to comport himself in all sorts of society, and if he was at home on the race-course and in the *coulisses*, he could be equally so at Windsor or Buckingham House. His manners were both exquisite and charming, and if Majesty in its fastnesses heard rumours, it may well have regarded them as the exaggerations of enemies, and was not averse from receiving one who could be amusing and respectful even if in other *milieus* he was audacious and profligate. I imagine the duke to have been one of those chartered libertines who can do and say things with impunity which less privileged, although far more proper, people would not have dared to say or do. Indeed there is a proof of this in an incident that occurred at

Windsor in the September of 1791 ; although even the compliant monarch exhibited annoyance at the audacity shown on this occasion. For Old Q actually introduced the notorious Madame du Barry to his royal master, on the terrace, *coram publico*. " Old Q—Queensberry," writes Walpole, " presented Madame du Barry to the King on the terrace at Windsor, and the King of England did not turn the same side that the late King of France used to turn to her, but the reverse, as he told Lord Onslow himself. It was a strange oblivion of etiquette in an *ancien gentilhomme de la chambre*, and more so of one dismissed." In a word, the King turned his back on the notorious lady who, with her introducer, was obliged to retire in such confusion as the shameless can feel at being snubbed.

Madame du Barry had apparently come to England in order to try to recover some of her jewels, of which she had been robbed by certain Jews, who had been caught and lodged in Newgate. Old Q, always ready to shew attention to foreigners (and there must have been much in common between this particular foreigner and himself) received her with *empressement*. Nor was he the only personage who did not disdain the company of this particularly infamous ex-royal mistress ; for the Lord Mayor entertained her to dinner and the Prince of Wales came to Richmond to partake of a banquet given, it would seem, in

her honour by Old Q at Queensberry House! Some ladies were even found ready to receive and meet her, and Walpole records how he encountered "the late Queen of France," as he facetiously terms her, at Mrs. Hobart's; and how at Old Q's, where the Comtesse Emilie de Boufflers played on the harp, and the Princess di Casteleiglia, the Neapolitan Minister's wife, "danced one of her country dances, with castanets, very prettily, with her husband," there was Madame du Barry, with whom Horace had much converse, brilliant and amusing and little thinking of the tragic fate in store for her.

It was in this same year that Old Q lost his friend—the one intimate associate whom he could boast of—George Selwyn, who died, aged seventy-two, on January 25th. He had been at Richmond not long before, and on December 8th we find him writing to Lord Carlisle, and saying, *inter alia*, "Sir L. Pepys was with me in the morning, and thought my pulse very quiet, which could only have been from the fatigue of the day before—*juste Dieu!* fatigue, of going 8 or 9 miles, my legs on the foreseat, and reposing my head on Jones's shoulder. The Duke would make her go, and everybody. He thinks that I am now the most helpless creature in the world, when, from infirmity, I want ten times more aid than I ever did."

It would seem from this that Old Q who, like all people when well themselves, could not under-

stand anyone being ill, had been driving Selwyn about when he was more fit for bed than a carriage. We have no record of how the selfish sybarite took this blow, he was too much an individualist to feel it deeply, one imagines ; but another close friend of Selwyn's, who was in a different way selfish but hardly a sybarite, was greatly affected by the event. " I am on the point of losing, or have lost, my oldest acquaintance and friend, George Selwyn, who was yesterday at the extremity . . . him I really loved not only for his infinite wit, but for a thousand good qualities ; " thus moans Horace Walpole to Mary Berry.

One can hardly imagine Old Q expressing even such regret. That he must have felt the loss of so old and intimate a companion cannot be doubted ; but a study of his character leads one to imagine his doing so, more or less from that selfish point of view with which those who live wholly for themselves regard the incidence of any event in their lives likely to interrupt their process of self-gratification ; and there is no doubt that Selwyn had been useful to Old Q for so many years and in so many ways, that his death must have made some difference—the difference, say, which that of an old and trusted man-servant might cause.

The year 1791 marks yet another phase in Old Q's career. For long he had been a star of the first magnitude—if not *the* star—on the Turf. But his long series of successes was now gradually

fated to decline ; and, curiously enough, he was, at least for a time, to find a redoubtable opponent in the man whose amazing and meteoric career forms the second part of this volume—Richard, seventh Earl of Barrymore. As I shall be dealing with this rather notorious personage later on, I will reserve the details of his turf exploits in which he chiefly came in contact with Old Q till then, merely mentioning here that the youthful Irish peer proved for a time, both in luck and cunning, a successful antagonist against the Scottish nobleman who possessed so large a share of both.

The engagement of Chifney as jockey, to which I have before alluded, was not propitious to the Duke ; the straightness of Chifney's riding was called in question more than once, although no actual scandal occurred as it did when the same jockey rode for the Prince of Wales and his royal employer was told by the Stewards of the Jockey Club that if he continued to give him mounts no gentleman would run his horses in the same race ; a circumstance which, as all the world knows, resulted in the Prince severing his connection with the Turf. Chifney was unlucky to his patrons, to put it mildly, and without going into the merits of the case—which, like so much connected with racing, is obscure and often unintelligible to the uninitiated—it can be at least stated that he has left a very unsatisfactory reputation behind him.

Old Q, in spite of much ill-luck, especially in

1794, when he does not appear with a single winning event to his credit, manfully stuck to the Turf for at least another fifteen years, although for the last seven of these he was very seldom represented on any race-course, and in 1803 actually had no horse running at all.

Although by the year 1795 Old Q had reached the age of seventy, and although he was destined to live for another decade and a half, he may now be said to have passed into what in the majority of men is the beginning of old age, but which in him was merely a stage of increased valetudinarianism; for, like many long-lived people, he had for a considerable time been a *malade imaginaire*, although he never let it interfere with his pursuit of pleasure in any of the manifold forms of amusement in which he indulged. He ate and drank as heartily as ever he had done, and even when he was very ill with a violent cough, in 1798, we hear of him partaking of an immense dinner and then complaining, not unnaturally, of indigestion. He went to race-meetings and to his clubs, White's and Brooks's, with the assiduity of a young man, and if wagers began to be laid as to the probability of his approaching death, he was himself ever ready to make bets on the chances of other peoples' length of life, or in fact on anything on earth. We find him sometimes at Richmond, surrounded by the French *émigrés*; sometimes at Brighton, with the Prince of Wales

and Mrs. Fitzherbert and their set, probably drinking bumper for bumper with his royal host or with the redoubtable 'Jockey of Norfolk,' over for 'a wet night' at the Pavilion, from neighbouring Arundel.

The tenor of his life was, indeed, much as for many a long year it had been ; and if the Rena and the Tondino and the Zamparini were of the past, there were plenty of opera-girls and other ladies of easy ethics, ready and anxious to take their place in the good graces of the noble Croesus whose wealth alone was quite sufficient to attract them to Piccadilly. For it was now practically wholly between Piccadilly and Richmond that the old rake oscillated. One hears not of his troubling princely Drumlanrig with his presence ; while Amesbury had been despoiled of its treasures and had become a home for a society of exiled nuns from Louvain, who must have found themselves rather wonderingly in a residence where old Duchess Catherine had uttered her very outspoken remarks, and Old Q had at least occasionally perpetrated some very unconventional actions.

What time the ageing but yet youthfully minded Duke could snatch from the pleasures afforded him by his seraglio or his table, he now gave to collecting, and we hear of his buying books and *bric-à-brac*, both of which kinds of property he regarded as equally decorative and nothing more.

An event occurred in 1798 which, no doubt, called away for a space his attention from his assemblage of animate and inanimate objects ; this was the marriage of Mie Mie, who on May 18th was led to a Southampton altar by the Earl of Yarmouth, the ' Red Herrings ' of the Regency, the *habitué* of Carlton House, and who was to become the notorious Marquis of Steyne of *Vanity Fair*. Mie Mie, or Signorina Maria Fagniani, already possessed the fortune (some £33,000) which Selwyn had left her ; and had besides much more grandiose ' expectations ' from Old Q. She was, therefore, a *partie* in every way, for she must have been as much endowed with charm and attraction as she was actually and potentially with wealth. The happy pair took up their residence at a house in Piccadilly, next door to Old Q, which, I imagine, he gave them as a wedding present, as he is known to have purchased it. By the way, some years later he bought a villa near Richmond, which had belonged to the Countess of Northampton, for four thousand guineas ; and I am inclined to think he did this for Mie Mie and her husband, as he certainly could not have required it for himself. Indeed, he was soon to sever his connection even with that place, the ostensible, if not the real, cause being some dispute he had with the local authorities concerning some land over which he had no right but which, apparently not realising this, he had caused to be enclosed. He left in

disgust with the townspeople and doubtless with the river of whose monotonous way of conducting itself we have already heard him complain. The loss to the place by his withdrawal was probably far greater than the value of the land in dispute.

The star of Piccadilly had now become a fixed luminary in the street of his predilection. Thence he made excursions to the opera and the theatres ; to great dinners and private concerts, such as that given by the Duke of Norfolk on February 2nd, 1801, at which the Prince was present and Banti and Viganoni and Rosedino performed. Or he would be seen driving in his little *vis-à-vis*, with its simple Q and coronet on the panels, innocent of those immense armorial bearings which almost covered the doors of the fashionable equipage of the period. Thus with his groom, Radford, on horseback behind him would he scour the West End, with eyes that marked his admiration at the sight of a pretty face or a well-shaped ankle—the old rip of the Regency on his habituated warpath.

A man occupying such an outstanding position as did Old Q was obviously marked down by the paragraphists as remunerative prey, and so we find his name cropping up in the newspapers of the period in all sorts of connections : he is ill, a paragraph ; he has paid marked attention to a new *figurante*, a paragraph ; he changes his doctor, a paragraph ; and so on. He must have been quite

a small source of income to such members of the press who supplied the papers with these and similar *memorabilia*. When there was a lack of such things the scribe indited occasional verse, generally of a scurrilous character, about some special escapade, or on the general trend of the Duke's less seemly habits. One of the latter had a great vogue at the time. It is headed *On the Supposed Death of Old Q*, and, as usual with such effusions, some of the stanzas are better left, as I leave them, in the decent obscurity of asterisks.

“ Sung, but done up, a shepherd grey
Must rot beneath the sod ;
Cherubs in cotton wrap his heart,
And bear it to his God.

The “ gem ” of Piccadilly's lost,
The first, the last, of men,
“ Take him, bright Heaven,” Newmarket roared,
And Epsom groaned “ Amen. ”

Spadilli and Banti hung their ears ;
Pam snivelled and looked sad ;
The “ Queen of Hearts ” with horror gazed,
And all the “ Knaves ” went mad.

“ He's borrow'd,” “ he's gone home,” “ he's dished,”
“ He's thrown,” “ his race is done,”
“ He's had,” “ he's smash'd,” “ he's tipt all nine,”
“ He's split,” “ he's cut and run ! ”

He's willed Dame “ Phillips ” all his skin,
To “ Liptrap ” all his spirit,
His brains “ St. Luke's,” his blood to “ Brooks,”
To “ Boothby ” all his merit.

When ragged virtue 'neath a hedge
 His dexter eye surveyed,
 Begashed and gored by sportive fate,
 He cheered the half-clad maid.

* * * * *

Oh ! lifeless, luckless, starters Q !
 Cupid's *bonne bouche* and dread,
 The Nymphs yclept Cyprian shall trim,
 And make him decent—dead.

That is if Death, or Hell, or Jove,
 Or Tipstaff, which you will :
 While ladies finger his remains,
 Say, can the peer lie still ? "

To such doggerel was Old Q exposed in the daily press—doggerel whose allusiveness is not yet sufficient to give it even an historical value, as the names introduced are those of but ephemeral and wholly unimportant personalities.

But although in 1801 the writer of this stuff supposed the Star of Piccadilly eclipsed this was very far from being the case ; and he continued to sit on his balcony, where Leigh Hunt saw him and " wondered at the longevity of his dissipation and the prosperity of his worthlessness," blind in one eye, partially deaf, toothless, and decrepit, but with the brightness of his remaining eye unimpaired, and with 'cuteness and desire still lighting up his features from which old age was powerless wholly to take away the sharpness and strength.

The ruling passions still survived, in spite of the *series annorum*, and in this very year we hear of

his driving down to Egham Races in a landau drawn by six horses, to see one of his horses on whose success he had set great store, and incidentally backed with much money, hopelessly beaten. Innumerable lampoons indicate his continual indulgence in another ruling passion ; while a third, that of amassing money, is indicated by his selling or leasing property which belonged to the title but over which it is questionable if he had any right of disposition.¹ In order, also, to add to his ready money he cut down any amount of timber on his Scottish estates, a fact bewailed by Burns in the well-known verses beginning :

“ As on the banks o’ wandering Nith
Ae smiling simmer-morn I strayed,”

and concluding with the bitter lines :

“ The worm that gnaw’d my bonnie trees,
That reptile wears a ducal crown.”

But Burns, on another occasion, was still more severe.

How shall I sing Drumlanrig’s grace,
Discarded remnant of a race
Once great in martial story ?
His forbears’ virtues all contrasted,
The very name of Douglas blasted—
His that inverted glory.

Hate, envy, oft the Douglas bore ;
But he has superadded more,
And sunk them in contempt.

¹ A subsequent law-suit by the Earl of Wemyss, who succeeded to the Earldom of March, against the Duke’s executors, over this matter, was inconclusive.

Follies and crimes have stain'd the name ;
But, Queensberry, thine the virgin claim—
From aught that's good exempt."

Wordsworth produced a sonnet on the same subject, in which he apostrophises Old Q as " Degenerate Douglas." Indeed few things the Duke ever did appear to have been more resented than this spoliation of the woods of Drumlanrig ; the only excuse that can now be made for his action being that it incited two poetic geniuses to verbal castigation.

The remaining years of Old Q's disreputable life were those of a man clinging desperately to the pleasures of an existence that without them would have been one of intolerable boredom. Although he lived till he was eighty-five he never succeeded in reaching that stage of dignity which is the one remaining virtue of old age. When he was not sitting on his Piccadilly balcony he was still going about a London whose manners and customs were wholly changing and whose society was, it must be confessed, losing much of the grace and suavity of his earlier days. Habits of life, dress, equipage, were all undergoing a curious metamorphosis ; and Old Q, with his outriders and his " running footmen," was becoming something of a survival, a kind of animated memory still doing his best to enjoy an existence that had lost most of its zeal ; always something of a curiosity, and a show even if he had not actually become a driveller—for he

never degenerated into that ; and if his morals left so much to be desired, his manners were as perfect (save for passing phases of irritability) as they had always been.

He showed this in no way more markedly than in his treatment of the unfortunate French refugees who had sought an asylum in an alien environment and who found in him one of their most thoughtful and delicate helpers. His manners to these distressed and unfortunate people were perfect ; and he was constantly arranging means for their amusement, without their realising the trouble and expense to which he put himself to soften in this way the rigours of their exile. In fairness to his memory, one ought, I think, to remember this amiable trait in what cannot otherwise be regarded but as a selfish and egotistical career.

He had, all his life, a passion for music, and Michael Kelly, who knew him well, has recorded that his knowledge and judgment of this art were far above those of most amateurs. But he had now reached a stage of senility when his increasing deafness made an indulgence in such things difficult. This particular disability was also responsible for his discontinuing those splendid dinners which he had been accustomed to give, and where the guests ranged from princes of the blood to his latest conquest from the opera or the theatres. Once when Kelly was dining *tête-à-tête* with him, he explained this :

“Had I,” he remarked, “at table more than one person now, they would be talking one to the other and I sitting by not able to hear what they were talking about, which would be extremely aggravating ; now, if I have but one to dine with me, that one must either talk to me or hold his tongue.”¹

In the March of 1803, the influenza being very prevalent, Old Q was struck down by it. He was in his 79th year, and all London thought the end had come ; at his age and after such a life as he had led it did, indeed, seem almost inevitable. Even the household at Piccadilly, with the clever French doctor, Elvizee (who was receiving £600 a year during his patron’s life) at its head, thought the same, and the world was advised that although the Duke was alive little hope of his recovery was entertained. And then reports were circulated that he was better ; and a few weeks later he was actually seen at his bedroom window, waving his night-cap to the passers-by ! It seemed as if nothing would kill the old rake ; and when he went off to Bath, at the beginning of April, people gave up speculating as to what his will would reveal. Much money (and that would have pleased him) must have been won—and incidentally lost—at White’s and Brooks’s and elsewhere during the month of March, 1803. Seven years later members of the former club were laying the odds on that seemingly perennial life !

¹ Kelly’s *Memoirs*.

As may be supposed, in an age of personalities a man like the Duke of Queensberry, who had been for so long prominently in the public eye and whose character had been for so many years animadverted upon, was in his old age regarded as fair game for the newspapers, which, when in want of some titillating piece of gossip, could generally rely on Old Q's doings or supposed doings to supply it. He had obtained such a reputation that if he showed friendship for any lady, that lady was regarded at once as being *au mieux* with him. Thus Mrs. Billington's name was at this time not infrequently linked with his. He certainly saw much of her, and although she was at this time (1802, when she was engaged at the Italian opera, on the departure of Banti) over thirty, and had become fat, her lovely soprano voice and her charm of manner had lost nothing of their attraction ; so that when we read that " the noble duke is learning his *sol-fa* of Mrs. Billington," it is not difficult at once to guess what the writer wishes to insinuate.

But it was not merely his relations with the beautiful or talented or, as in Mrs. Billington's case, both, that afforded material for newspaper gossip. Old Q's very way of life, what he ate, what he drank, was recorded with a particularity which indicated that sort of back-stairs gossip which may be read now with a certain amount of interest as being more or less historical, but which during the lifetime of its ' subject ' possessed all the

elements of a vulgar pandering to impertinent curiosity.

The article *How to Live, after a Ducal Recipe*, which appeared in one of the newsheets, as being responsible probably for one of the best remembered incidents in the duke's career—the famous milk-baths—may be given as a curiosity of journalism.

“ If,” we read, “ the D—— of Q—— does not extend his life to a still longer period, it will not be for want of culinary comforts and those other succulent arts by which longevity is best promoted. His grace's sustenance is thus daily administered : At seven in the morning he regales in a warm milk-bath, perfumed with almond powder, where he takes his coffee and a buttered muffin, and afterwards retires to bed ; he rises about nine, and breakfasts on *café au lait*, with new-laid eggs just parboiled ; at eleven he is presented with two warm jellies and rusks ; at one he eats a veal cutlet *à la Maintenon* ; at three, jellies and eggs repeated ; at five, a cup of chocolate and rusks ; at seven he takes a hearty dinner from high-seasoned dishes, and makes suitable libations of claret and madeira ; at ten, tea, coffee, and muffins ; at twelve he sups off a roast pullet, with a plentiful dilution of lime-punch. At one a.m. he retires to bed in high spirits and sleeps till three, when his man-cook, to the moment, waits upon him in person with a hot and savoury veal

cutlet, which, with a potation of wine and water, prepares him for his further repose, that continues generally uninterrupted till the morning summons him to his lactean bath. In this routine of loving comforts are the four-and-twenty hours invariably divided ; so that if his grace does not know with Sir Toby Belch that ' our life is composed of the four elements,' he knows at least with Sir Andrew Aguecheek, ' that it consists in eating and drinking.' "

Such is the sort of thing to which Old Q was subjected. The whole is probably a concoction based on one or two facts ; all one can say is, that if there was any truth in it, and his digestion could at his age stand such a regimen, the wonder is he is not alive now.

At the risk of being tiresome I must quote what is, perhaps, the most famous of all those lampoons which were produced on the octogenarian duke, and at which he probably laughed as heartily, with, as usual in his case, an under-current of cynicism, as any of those who read the verses when they appeared in the daily press. In 1804 he met with an accident, his chair being run into by a hackney coach and upset, and he himself being injured. Except that a shaking and even a slight hurt to a man just on eighty is not unattended by risk, the mishap does not appear to have been serious. But it was quite enough for the scribes of the day to ' suppose ' Old Q's death once more ;

and there duly appeared the following 'Elegy,' preceded by a quotation from Horace—*Longa Tythonum minuit senectus*, with which I may fittingly close this chapter :

" And what is all this grand *to do*
That runs each street and alley through ?
'Tis the departure of Old Q,
The star of Piccadilly.

The King, God bless him ! gave a whew !
" Two dukes just dead—a third gone too,
What ! What ! could nothing save Old Q,
The star of Piccadilly ? "

" Thank Heaven ! thank Heaven ! " exclaims Miss Prue ;
" My mother and grandmother too
Can now walk safe from that vile ' Q,'
The star of Piccadilly."

The jockey boys, Newmarket's crew,
Who know a " little thing—or two "
Cry out : " He's done ! we've done Old Q,
The star of Piccadilly ! "

On Richmond's sunny bank there grew,
'Midst violets sweet, a wanton yew,
Crabbed and old ; and that mourns ' Q,'
The star of Piccadilly."

The Monsieurs and Signoras too,
Like cats in love set up their mew,
" Ah morto, morto, pov'ro ' Q ' ! "
The star of Piccadilly !

Townshends, Macmanus, all the hue
And cry of Bow Street, each purlieu,
Each little corner wants its ' Q ' ;
The star of Piccadilly.

Poll, Peggy, Cath'rine, Patty, Sue,
Descendants of old dames he knew,
All mourn your tutor, ancient ' Q,'
The star of Piccadilly.

Old Nick he whisked his tail so blue,
And grinn'd, and leer'd and look'd askew—
"Oho," says he, " I've got my ' Q,'
The star of Piccadilly."

On wings of sulphur down he flew ;
All London take your last adieu,
There, there away he claws Old Q,
The star of Piccadilly.

And now this may be said of ' Q,'
That long he ran all Folly thro',
For ever seeking something new :
He never cared for me nor you,
But, to engagements strictly true,
At last he gave the Devil his due ;
And died a boy—at eighty-two—
Poor ' Q ' of Piccadilly."



CHAPTER VII

THE DUKE OF QUEENSBERRY (*Concluded*)

WITH the disappearance of Old Q's name from the Racing Calendar in 1806 his long and very profitable connection with the Turf came to an end. He had had horses running in various events during a period of fifty-seven years, a length of time hardly if ever equalled ; and thus his name comes down to us, in this direction, as one of the outstanding patrons of horse-racing in this country. Taking him all round, this was the best work he did ; for if his efforts were primarily in his own interests, they had a larger influence in forwarding and perfecting a sport on which the careful breeding of horses so greatly depends ; and one somehow likes to think that at least this can be placed to the credit of one against whom so many charges can be substantiated.

Old Q must have spent a great deal of money, but he must also have made much—£300,000 on the Turf alone, it is estimated—and he inherited more ; and so his charities, which might have been

generous in a less well-endowed man, were insignificant in a millionaire. For that he was a millionaire was proved by his will. He kept a balance of £100,000 at Coutts's, and was accustomed to have as much as £20,000 in cash in his house. Indeed he loved money with a curious passion in one who had all his life never really felt the want of it, and in his old age when other powers of enjoyment were dropping from him one by one, this delight in wealth remained, perhaps the more acute as he felt that the time for leaving his gold could not be far off.

Various warnings must have made him realise this, although his vitality was such that he probably persuaded himself that he was immune from the ills of ordinary men. However, at the beginning of 1807 he was evidently in a bad way, or so his doctor thought, for a notice was issued to the effect that "The Duke of Queensberry has declined in health so rapidly within the last month that his physicians have but little hope of his surviving through the winter." And again the indomitable old fighter proved them in the wrong; for in the following April he was to be seen at his window, ogling the pretty girls as he had been doing any time during the previous decade.

Bets again began to be made on his chances of life, but one of the members of White's, Mr. C. H. Bouverie, bet another (Mr. Blackford) 150 guineas to 100 guineas that Old Q would outlive the Duke

of Grafton ; which he won.¹ The incorrigible old man is even found laying wagers himself on the day and hour of his own death ; and one can imagine him paying the £500 he had staked with a certain grim satisfaction. One wonders where the satisfaction would have come in had he won, as he would not have been alive to pocket the money !

As is not infrequently the case with men who possess something of the miser in their dispositions, Old Q could occasionally be surprisingly generous with his money, and one of his most satisfactory actions during the last years of his life was his offering monetary help to General Picton, in the action brought against the latter for a technical misdemeanour during his governorship of Trinidad. Picton had no occasion, as it turned out, to take advantage of this offer, but he recognised the spirit in which it was made, and while in the Peninsula was accustomed to write reliable news of the operations to his would-be benefactor. At Old Q's death he found he had been left £5,000.

That death was now imminent. It was caused by a stranguary brought on, it was supposed, by eating too much ripe fruit. Several operations were performed, which although they gave tem-

¹ In the previous year (1809) " Mr. G. Talbot bets Lord Charles Manners ten guineas that the Duke of Queensberry is not alive this day two years," May 8th, 1809. Talbot won.

porary relief proved too great a strain on the constitution of an old man ; and on December 23rd, 1810, at about half-past three in the afternoon, Old Q died, having passed his 85th birthday by exactly eighteen days.

If the career of the Duke of Queensberry might be said, like that of the Duke of Wharton, to have been "the scorn and wonder of his days," the contents of his will were destined to prove equally astonishing. In the first place, he left to Maria Fagniani, Countess of Yarmouth, £150,000, as well as his houses in Piccadilly and at Richmond, together with their contents ; to Lord Douglas, £100,000 ; £20,000 to Colonel Thomas ; and £10,000 each to the Duchess of Somerset, the Countess of Dunmore, Lady Anne Hamilton, General Crawford, Lady William Gordon, and Sir James Montgomery ; his French physician, M. Elvizée, received £5,000, as did General Sir Thomas Picton, Mr. James, Lord Sidmouth, the Lock Hospital, and St. George's Hospital. Among lesser amounts we find Lady Hamilton, the friend of Nelson, benefiting by an annuity of £4,000, and £1,000 down ; to the clerk at Coutts's, who kept the Duke's account there, a legacy of £600 ; £200 and his horses and carriages to John Radford his groom ; similar legacies to various servants ; £1,000 each to three French ladies "of some celebrity," and so forth. The Earl of Yarmouth was his residuary legatee. Sir James Montgomery,

Edward Bullock Douglas, and William Murray were the executors. To the second he left his library, which does not appear to have been of special value, so many of the works it contained being incomplete. Altogether Old Q is reputed to have left personalty to the value of nearly one million, four hundred thousand of which was in cash.¹

After everything had been discharged, Lord Yarmouth as residuary legatee received nearly a quarter of a million. But before all the legacies were paid, the estate had been put into Chancery, as there were no fewer than twenty-five codicils to the will, and apparently these, or some of them, had not been duly attested. However, sooner or later everyone received his or her bequest; and if he could rest anywhere, Old Q rested at last in a vault under the altar in the Church of St. James's, Piccadilly, where he was buried on December 31st, 1810.

The Queensberry estates were inherited by the Duke of Buccleuch, Sir Charles Douglas, afterwards Marquess of Queensberry, Lord Douglas, and the Earl of Wemyss. In the year after his death much of Old Q's plate, wine, etc., was sold by auction, and fetched immense prices, as there were many who were anxious to possess mementoes

¹ The Legacy Duty amounted to £120,000. These facts are given in *The Gentleman's Magazine* and *The Scots Magazine*, as well as *The Times*.

of a man who had bulked so largely and for so long in London society and to whose name an almost legendary reputation had become attached.

There must have been unbounded satisfaction among the very numerous band who benefited by the Duke's decease ; but he had forgotten, unintentionally or not I cannot say, one person who had good ground for grievance, and this was exhibited to the world on June 11th, 1811, when the action of Mr. Fuller, apothecary of Piccadilly, against the Duke's executors came on for hearing in the Court of Common Pleas. It was a statement of claim for services rendered during the eight years previous to old Q's death, and included the amazing number of 9340 visits besides 1700 night-calls, on which the apothecary remained in attendance at 138 Piccadilly for no fewer than 1215 nights ; which a simple process of arithmetic will shew to average between three and four visits during every twenty-four hours ! Mr. Fuller demanded £10,000 for this ceaseless assiduity, and Lord Yarmouth himself admitted the justice of his claim. As a result the jury awarded him £7,500, on what exact principle only juries, I suppose, could say. When he got his money I don't know, probably not till 1816, when all the legacies appear to have been duly paid and the much contested estate of George Douglas, Duke of Queensberry, was finally cleared up.

Around a character like that of Old Q innumerable fantastic stories become inevitably woven.¹ Given a rake, and particularly one whose wealth enables him to indulge in all the vagaries an ill-regulated imagination can suggest, there is no end to the stories that get circulated about him. It is the case of the dog with a bad name; and Old Q had come, after many years, to possess a very bad name indeed. He had passed as it were, into a kind of legend, and was credited with things which in another period of the world's history Petronius might have chronicled and Juvenal reprobated. It is significant that it was as he grew older that scandal became ever more and more

¹ One of the books in which many of these stories, including the one concerning Roche which has been given earlier in this volume, are gathered together, is called *The Piccadilly Ambulator, or Old Q, containing memoirs of the private life of that ever-green votary of Venus. Throughout which are interspersed anecdotes of the most noted Fashionables, his contemporaries.* It is in two duodecimo volumes, was published in 1808, and was written by "J. P. Hurstone, Esq." It possesses a coloured frontispiece shewing Old Q, and includes piquant anecdotes of various young ladies with whom Old Q, who is throughout described either as Lord Marchmont or the Duke of Quiz, was associated. Their names are given discreetly as 'Stella,' 'Sarah,' 'a quakeress,' 'Miss C., a school-girl, at one of the well-known seminaries in Queen Square'; and so forth. It can hardly be regarded as reliable, although no doubt its anecdotes are based on a certain amount of truth.

Another work of a somewhat similar kind, in which Old Q is introduced as 'Lord Piccadilly,' is *Nocturnal Revels*, by an anonymous author who calls himself "a monk of the order of St. Francis" (a reference of course to the Hell Fire Club). It appeared in two volumes in 1779. These books, and others of a like kind, are described in Ashbee's *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, privately printed in 1877.

interested in him. In those earlier days, when Walpole and others were distributing their tit-bits of gossip, we hear little of his doings which might not as easily be associated with a dozen other outstanding lights of society whose names have passed into the limbo of forgotten personalities. It is rather as a survival into a less free and easy, but not necessarily less vicious, environment that Old Q began gradually to be endowed with a sort of satanic reputation ; and the walls of 138 Piccadilly and Queensberry House were said to witness scenes as pagan as they were frequent.

Something of this was no doubt true. When Raikes says that the Duke of Queensberry was of the same school as the Duc de Richelieu and as great a profligate, he was stating a fact which no one, I believe, has ever attempted to deny ; and we to-day visualise the Old Q of a thousand unseemly tales by the vignette the same diarist has left of him—"a little sharp-looking man, very irritable, who swore like ten thousand troopers, and was enormously rich and selfish," with the added adjuncts of the caricaturists—a modernized satyr leering with lascivious eyes at the rather sophisticated nymphs who were not always averse from his attentions.

And such he undoubtedly was ; but, as I hope to have shewn, although he was an incarnation of one who has lived for himself and his carnal pleasures, there were (as there nearly always are in

the greatest reprobates) other less reprehensible qualities in his character, and a few actually commendable ones. He could, for instance, on occasion, exhibit flashes of generosity—generosity I mean which did not presuppose some self-gratification ; he was a notoriously good master to his servants, none of whom was ever discharged precipitately or unfairly. His manners down to the time when growing infirmities imparted to them a certain temporary roughness (for which, by the way, he was, as Wraxall records, very ready to apologise), were of that exquisite kind with which the eighteenth century glossed over so many essential defects of mind and character. Those who are acquainted with *The Young Duke* by Disraeli, will remember the two notable protagonists of that novel—George Augustus Frederick, Duke of St. James's, and William Henry, Marquess of Marylebone. Old Q always seems to me to be something of a combination of these two imaginary personages. For he possessed the manners of the one together with the sporting proclivities and rather vulgar outlook on life of the other : he was capable of shining in a drawing room with St. James's and was endowed with something of his graces ; he was equally at home with Marylebone among horses and jockeys ; and if he could coo in a lady's chamber as softly as any sucking dove, he could swear in the stables or the low haunts of London with the energy and vocifer-

ation of the "ten thousand troopers" of Raikes's phrase.

Old Q's shrewdness has become almost as proverbial as his licentiousness, but it had in it a quality which surpassed ordinary acuteness, and the writer who I think has given us the best vignette of this really remarkable product of the eighteenth century, Mr. G. S. Street,¹ has put his finger on it—a logical mind which went in his case with what may be termed a logic of the passions. "He made up his mind," writes Mr. Street, "that certain pleasures were, for him, the highest good in life, and to have them in abundance and for the longest possible time he used every means at his disposal—wealth, a great position, and all his faculties. All this calmly, relentlessly, even with a certain Scotch canniness, and with an indifference to the world's opinion so complete that even in an eighteenth century duke it should gain him some credit for courage. . . . He was a man of taste, and if you can waive the moral point, a gentleman. . . . An evil type of aristocracy, it may be, but at least an authentic aristocrat."

He was born *monstrari digito* ; from his earliest years the public had had its eye on the youth, the young man, the matured and complete article, who had accomplished so many astounding things and was destined for so elevated a position. What the public wanted, the newspapers took, even in those

¹ In his *Ghosts of Piccadilly*.

days, no small pains to supply ; and it wanted, *inter multa alia*, details of a career whose details it knew would shock it ; the concocters of society paragraphs, of that *ana* which those in a less elevated sphere so greedily consume, were not in any way remiss in providing the desired anecdotes and the expected scandal.

In course of time such things became household words and Old Q passed from being an individual into being a kind of institution. Things done and said by others, if they were sufficiently characteristic, became things said and done by him alone ; and at last no story was too improbable, no saying too gross, for the ever credulous world of London to swallow as his. His fame had become legendary, his very house had become a 'sight,' and country cousins whispered as they passed below the famous balcony in Piccadilly the information to one another that here the man who was the incarnation of vice dwelt with his shameless *houris*—a sort of British Tiberius in a sea-less Capri.

Much of all this was ridiculous exaggeration ; but even when we allow for that, when we allow for the licence of his period and the profligacy of many of his peers, Old Q stands forth as a type of that depravity for which good style cannot atone and for which even exquisite manners and a polished demeanour are but poor and inadequate substitutes.

Not long ago I was a guest in the house to which such a sinister reputation clung for so long ; and I could not but think how its once reprobate owner would have appreciated the scene, for the majority of those seated in his whilom dining-room were ladies ; and I seemed to see his wicked old ghost leering behind some of the fairer *convives* and, Mephistopheles-like, whispering some indiscretion in their ears. . . . For whatever permutations may occur to that building, even should it be entirely reconstructed (as it practically has been) or entirely demolished (as it may quite likely one day be), the phantom of its one outstanding owner will for ever haunt it ; not to be laid even by the course of time or the manifold changes of a great city. Always will he sit (or so one thinks) sunning himself in the Piccadilly of his predilection ; always will his little *vis-à-vis* pass and repass along that street of streets ; always will Jack Radford be in attendance ; and the aged Don Juan will always be surrounded by the *houris* who are now

Cold, cold, as those who lived and loved
A thousand years ago.

Later ghosts may flit for a while here : the laughing philosopher with Punch's straw between his lips ; the grim hero of a hundred fights, stiffly saluting as he passes under the historic portico ; the lovely Devonshire and the more lovely Gunning ; Fox in an apotheosis, and Sir Francis

in a passion of patriotism. . . . But they will pass, and leave the little sharp-eyed votary of love, triumphant over beauty and genius and fame, as Love itself is for ever triumphant.

RICHARD BARRY
EARL OF BARRYMORE



CHAPTER I

THE EARL OF BARRYMORE

WHEN a man has earned a sobriquet so fearsome as that of 'Hellgate,' one may not unreasonably expect to find in the details of his career so much that is distinctly not *virginibus puerisque* that a record of his sayings and doings might well seem to be unfitted for general consumption, even in these days when we have become accustomed when talking of spades to use no circumlocution or periphrasis whatever. But, truth to tell, although there is no denying that the seventh Earl of Barrymore was a rake, one can never quite imagine him as being altogether so bad as his cognomen paints him. Indeed, relatively, to some of those with whose careers we have been concerned in these volumes, he may be said to have been more scatter-brained than vicious, and rather to have suffered from hereditary failings than to have been individually and personally wicked. His bark, I think, was worse than his bite ; although that bark was often discordant enough.

He comes before us rather as a wild young Irishman ready for any pranks, delighting in all sorts of madcap frolics, than as the canny calculating type of character exhibited by Old Q, or as the shameless exponent of disgraceful villainy as was Colonel Francis Charteris.

The fact is he had one circumstance in his favour ; he never grew into an old age of licentiousness as did these two notorious rakes ; indeed he was cut off untimely by an accident before he had reached his twenty-fourth year. This might well, of course, be regarded as a proof of his precocity in vice, considering the reputation he gained for himself during his short life and the name he has left to after generations. But much may be forgiven a boy (for he was, at least in years, little more) which would properly be reprehended in a man of mature age ; and so, I think, we may find some excuse for his vagaries, in his youth, his unformed character, and the many temptations that surrounded him. Selwyn thought him a mere buffoon chiefly because of his theatrical predilections, and speaks of him as “ that *étourdi* Barrymore playing the fool in three or four different characters ; ” when he exhibited his histrionic powers at the Richmond theatre in 1790 ; nor could Old Q away with him, agreeing with his friend (and it is amusing to think of these two as *censores morum*) in not considering that the young man was a fit companion for Mie Mie ! But one

must remember that the youthful Barrymore had shewn a remarkable astuteness in racing matters, and had, indeed, more than held his own against the redoubtable Queensberry at Newmarket ; while Selwyn was as jealous as an old woman of anyone who should endeavour to worm himself into the good graces of his little pet. Horace Walpole from his Olympian heights of virtuous virtuosity regarded the gyrations of the stage-struck peer with the but slightly veiled contempt with which he looked on most men and things (unless they were gothic) ; and we find him calling himself an old fool for going to see young Barrymore disporting himself on the boards.

Nowadays, such a passion as Lord Barrymore displayed for the stage would have been quite in the movement, when *the* profession has caught to itself so many members of the peerage and when young men of family have been known to disport themselves as ballet-girls, not without applause. But Barrymore was a pioneer, and like all such was doomed to incur the fury of some, the contempt of many, the wonder of more.

But this is to anticipate much which should be more artistically and gradually revealed in the following pages, where we shall see what claim our hero really had to his recognised sobriquet, and something of what his authentic character actually was.

Thackeray, in one of the best of his novels, tells

us that the Barrys are, "as everybody knows, old, noble and illustrious," and in Roaring Harry Barry, the father of Barry Lyndon, may, perhaps, be adumbrated the characteristics of that sixth Earl of Barrymore, the father of our 'Hellgate,' who would seem to have had as great a passion for gambling and the laying of strange wagers, and to have been as good a judge of a horse, as Old Q himself. This Earl married Lady Emily Stanhope, a daughter of William, Earl of Harrington, and by her had a daughter and three sons, all of whom became, if not famous, at least during their lifetime, notorious; Caroline, born in 1768, who from her flamboyant language was known as 'Billingsgate'; Henry, born in 1770, called, because of a club-foot, 'Cripplegate'; Augustus, born in 1773, afterwards amazingly a parson, and known as 'Newgate,' on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle that he seems to have been acquainted with the interiors of most of the then existing prisons *except* Newgate; and Richard, born on August 14th, 1769, the subject of this short memoir and, as I have said, the 'Hellgate' of his day.

Richard Barry, seventh Earl of Barrymore, began life under a certain disadvantage, his father dying when he was but five years old (on Aug. 1st, 1773)—a circumstance that, if propitious so far as the accumulation of wealth during a long minority is concerned, cannot in various other aspects be said to be a good thing for an expectant

heir. However, he had the advantage of his mother's attention during his early years, and she seems to have looked after her children carefully—perhaps too carefully in view of what they grew into—and in the case of the young Earl, who is said to have shewn a certain precocity, to have taken special pains with his education. To this end she placed him under the tuition of the Rev. Mr. Tickell, afterwards Rector of Gawsworth in Cheshire and East Mersey in Essex, but who was living at Wargrave, Berkshire,¹ which then sequestered spot was regarded “as more applicable to an unremitting course of study, than the complicated and incessant temptations of a public seminary; the better to avoid the fashionable infection of those *fascinating follies*, to which he so soon after fell a pecuniary victim.”² This was no doubt his mother's idea, but as we shall see, she died before his education was completed, and his remaining guardians appear to have had no schemes at all with regard to their ward's upbringing.

In the meanwhile he was living with Mr. Tickell at Wargrave, where, says the anonymous authority I have just quoted, “he became initiated and resident with a preceptor whose extensive erudition and love of learning is too universally known to require eulogism; his anxious care and tender

¹ He was, however, buried at Wargrave in 1800.

² *Truth opposed to Fiction, or an authentic and impartial Review of the Life of the late Earl of Barrymore, by a Personal Observer.* 1793.

assiduity to enrich the mind and improve the morals of his pupil were matters of equal notoriety in the neighbourhood of his residence," and so forth in the same strain. The Rev. Mr. Tickell no doubt first found his charge amenable enough, and that the boy possessed youthful attractions at this time is indicated by Mrs. Lybbe Powys, who in her Diary for 1777 speaks of meeting "the sweet little Lord Barrymore" at an entertainment at Henley, where her own son, then aged fourteen, amused the company by remarking to Lady Villiers that "Young Barrymore was much too small to be a Lord!"

A child of eight might well be docile, but it was not long before he appears to have got a bit out of control, and his reverend tutor no doubt had his hands full in curbing the impetuosity of one whose "impatient volatility," we are told, "rendered him inflexible to remonstrance, and left no hopes of success, but from such manual chastisement as the philosophic mind rejects and reason revolts at."

I rather wonder if the anonymous author of *Truth as opposed to Fiction* was not Mr. Tickell himself! There is in it a kind of personal touch which would almost make one think so. In any case he was evidently tired of his charge, and so when Lady Harrington died, and the boy's grandmother, *old* Lady Harrington, took the matter in hand, it was arranged that he should prepare the boy for entry into a public school where manual

chastisement was not rejected by the mind or revolted at by the reason. Lady Harrington died in 1780, when the boy was eleven, and three years later he was duly sent to Eton, his grandmother, anxious rather that the young Earl should make a splash—"uphold his rank," she no doubt phrased it—than that he should benefit by scholastic training, giving him, it is said, £1,000 for pocket money.

The ghost of his mother must have turned in its grave (if ghosts do anything but walk) at this reversal of all her well-laid schemes. Here was the boy, titled, rich, spoilt, and self-willed, sent into an environment where at least one of these attributes was pretty sure to bear its crop of disaster, and with his pockets bulging with money. Still one imagines that a certain discipline, and especially the existence of the old lady who was his then Providence on earth, was for a time sufficient to keep the young Earl within bounds. But it was not long after he had been at Eton that news arrived of her decease; and a story is told of how the information was imparted to the boy. His house-master called him into his room, one day, and with a severe air began by asking him how he was progressing in his work, and presently told him to translate something from Virgil. When he had finished, the master said to him, "Your grandmother is very ill, my lord"; at the same time ordering him to do some more translation; at length: "She is very ill, my lord," he continued,

and when young Barrymore said he was sorry to hear it, told him to continue his lesson ; a few moments after, " She's dying, my lord," he announced. " What ! dying," exclaimed the boy : " Come, come, my lord, she is dead ; now you know the worst. Go to your seat and make the best of an irretrievable misfortune ! "

It was, indeed, a misfortune greater than young Lord Barrymore could have realised ; for with the death of the old lady, injudicious as she seems to have been, he was bereft of all authority ; for whatever guardians may have been appointed to look after the welfare of the lad and his brothers and sister, they seem to have taken their responsibilities so lightly as to let the boisterous members of the youthful family do pretty well what they liked.

The first proof of young Barrymore's determination to take advantage of his liberty was not long in exhibiting itself. He was home for the Easter holidays when he heard of the Newmarket Spring Meeting (1785), and away he went to it with his brother Henry and some of his school-fellows. Arrived on the course he laid the odds on a race about to be run, to win a thousand guineas . . . and he won. The story adds that when the bookmaker handed him notes for a thousand pounds he promptly counted them, and asked for the other fifty. Even if he was to prove a fool in many respects, he evidently had his wits

about him on this his initial experience of the Turf!

That day's success was perhaps the most unfortunate of his life : it gave him an undue opinion of his astuteness in racing matters, and it determined him, when he should reach his majority, to keep a racing stable—not in itself a reprehensible thing by any means ; but in his case productive of much disaster.

In the meanwhile the exploits of the Barry brothers and their friends were of a more puerile character ; although they were such as to gain them quite a local notoriety around their own home or in the places they visited. One night they would all sally out and take down the signs of taverns they came to, substituting one for the other ; and one such freak was played with success at Wargrave, where they were the guests, during one of the holidays, of Mr. Tickell. Another favourite diversion of these young bloods was to arm themselves with horsewhips and after dark perambulate the villages, slashing at and smashing the windows of houses and cottages, and decamping before the owners could catch them. Yet another was to dress themselves as postillions and, having made it square with the regular ones, to drive people on to banks or into ruts, and not infrequently to overturn them into ditches. There was a variety of other ways in which the youthful Earl and his companions diverted themselves at

the expense of unoffending people, not very dissimilar from those silly freaks of the last Marquess of Hastings, who in the mid-Victorian period resuscitated many of the frolics which we usually consider solely characteristic of an earlier period.

But they must, *per contra*, have made themselves popular with the villagers when they got up sports and played cricket and other games, and were lavish in the prizes they presented. But, so far as young Barrymore himself was concerned, there was a species of amusement which appealed even more than such bucolic festivities ; this was theatricals, which were destined to play so large a part in his subsequent career and in which, even at the age of seventeen, he is said to have been a creditable and even brilliant performer, sustaining the part, for instance, of Flash in Garrick's *Miss in her 'Teens*, with great spirit and *élan*.

The trouble was that although, no doubt, he had an adequate allowance for a school-boy, he was a very precocious one, and had already acquired many of the tastes of a man, for which he had anything but enough. But he was an Earl and only a few years removed from the enjoyment of a rich estate, and was thus likely to find little difficulty in anticipating his inheritance by having recourse to money-lenders. This solution of the money difficulty he quickly determined to take advantage of ; for he was by no means ready to wait for his emancipation. " Constitutionally dis-

posed to *command*," says our anonymous author, "he felt himself awkwardly inclined to obey; naturally averse to every degree of subordination but what contributed to the support of his *own ease*, or the promotion of *his pleasure*. Gifted by nature with talents of no inferior estimation, it is only to be lamented that they were so incessantly perverted to an almost unprecedented degradation of dignity, and an irretrievable prostitution of property." And the writer proceeds, further on, in his Johnsonian rhapsody, to record how, "succeeding thus in his early attempt at power, by breaking down the fences of magisterial influence, totally destroying every degree of subordination, and establishing the equality so applicable to his purpose; he became implicitly obedient to every insinuating seduction of *folly* and *profusion* that the insensibility of inexperienced youth could devise, or usurious supplies of money support. Some years within his minority, in direct imitation of a charioteering baronet, who had equally excited public attention, he became intimately connected with the long list of Jews and most notorious usurers, so indispensably necessary to the gratification of his present purposes."

Of these a certain 'Black Dick,' as he was called, was during the three years that remained of Lord Barrymore's minority his constant associate and money-lender, and was, indeed, known as Barrymore's *nurse*. Under his *aegis* the young man not

only became plentifully supplied with ready cash but he gained so curious and peculiar a knowledge of the various ways of 'raising the wind,' with its corollaries of mortgages, post-obits, and the rest, that by the time he succeeded to his estates he knew as much about such matters as any of the Jews in whose hands he voluntarily placed himself. The fact is he was exceedingly well provided with brains ; but he made a disastrous use of them ; and his senses became rampant over his intellect.

Having thus arranged, by a system of post-obits and other similar means, to get himself well supplied with ready money, Barrymore, his Eton days prematurely at an end, although how this was brought about, whether by expulsion or voluntary withdrawal, I have not been able to ascertain,¹ began his career as a young man of fashion with all the attendant circumstances such a course of life then connoted.

His personal appearance at this period must have been as attractive as were to many his boisterous spirits and to all his innate good manners. He was very tall and slim, and his agility was surprising. From the pictures extant of him we can see that he had a high and broad forehead, an aquiline nose and a full and rounded chin ; but his whole countenance is indicative of that effeminacy which is not infrequently to be found in

¹ It need hardly be said that he finds no place among Creasy's *Eminent Etonians*.

conjunction with rakishness, although much of his character belied this appearance even if his love of dressing up to some extent confirmed it.

“His acuteness of penetration was indisputable,” we are told by one who knew him well,¹ “his equanimity of temper was never ruffled but in cases of meanness or oppression—he was bursting hourly from the *crysalis*, and would have been soon in full beauty, wing and request.” The same authority speaks of his elocutionary powers and the extraordinary retentiveness of his memory, the gentleness of his nature, and many other excellent gifts with which he had been endowed. Allowing for William’s partiality, there is no doubt that young Barrymore entered on life with many advantages; advantages of person, character, wealth, and position; just as did Buckingham and Rochester and Wharton, with all of whom he has been not inaptly compared. But as in all these there was something which mitigated against their essential qualities, so in the case of Barrymore we find some malignant fairy’s gift counteracting and vitiating all the good endowments of better disposed sponsors. The fact is, for one thing, that he too early became his own master. No one seems really to have thought it his business to attempt restraint or direction of the youth and his brothers after the death of their grandmother;

¹ *Life of the late Earl of Barrymore*, by Anthony Pasquin (*alias* J. W. Williams), 1793.

and thus, although Barrymore was not of age, we find him anticipating his inheritance and at eighteen beginning a way of life which at twenty-eight it would not have been too early to indulge in ; allowing that there was any special reason for his embarking on it at any age.

He proceeded to set up an establishment on most ambitious lines ; his stables particularly being on a scale of remarkable splendour and completeness : and we are told of the number of his carriage horses, which were only equalled by the number of his hacks and hunters. Everything was done with magnificence, and the young man, who undoubtedly possessed a very considerable fund of astuteness and commonsense, was so much a prey to the *folie des grandeurs* that he sacrificed everything to its baneful attractions. He soon had a large number of horses in training at Newmarket, a number he gradually increased by purchase of animals at exorbitant prices ; and if for a time he was not unsuccessful on the Turf, its ravages on his fortune was ultimately to show that this was but a flash in the pan, the success that so often attends the novice in most sports and games of chance. From first to last he is said to have lost the enormous sum of £300,000 during his relatively short career on the Turf.

But this is to anticipate ; and in the two years following his introduction to racing, that is in 1788 and 1789, he not only did well generally, but

actually succeeded in having two horses placed in the Derby, a success specially annoying to another great patron of horse-racing, the Earl of March, who, although he had by that time been consistently racing for forty years, had never succeeded in doing so much.

But it was not only on the Turf that young Barrymore was spending money. He began to build a large house in London. The site he selected was in Piccadilly next to Lord Coventry's residence, and here, with Novolieski as architect, he erected the mansion, now numbered 105, which in our own days was owned by Sir Julian Goldsmid and later occupied by the now defunct Isthmian Club. That he ever actually inhabited it I think doubtful. He could hardly have had time, for in the rate-books it appears to have been empty in 1791, and we know that old Q purchased the lease of it and its very considerable stables in the following year, although for what purpose, as he had his own home at No. 138, is not clear.¹ In 1789 Barrymore is found living in a much less ambitious residence, No. 114 Piccadilly, on the site of which the hideous skeleton of a very long projected hotel now stands, and which seems before then to have been the abode of the Novolieski who designed No. 105. Perhaps Barrymore was living at No. 114 during the erection of the larger

¹ He is said to have given £3,050 for the Lease of No. 105, and 1,300 guineas for the stabling.

mansion ; but in that case, even if he did move into it, he could but have enjoyed it for a very short period. The matter is not, perhaps, of great importance, especially as a house he *did* occupy in the country is far more closely associated with one of his outstanding propensities, that for the stage.

It has been wondered at that he should have selected the little village of Wargrave in which to disport himself in those theatrical activities with which his name is as much associated as it is with the Turf and even less reputable forms of amusement. The reason, I think, is fairly obvious. It was there that he had spent several years under the *aegis* of Mr. Tickell ; it was a charming spot ; there was a limited but select circle of people in the neighbourhood ; and it was within an easy distance of London ; and when he took the house on the banks of the river, still known by his name, he no doubt intended to build the theatre which he eventually caused to be constructed, and could hardly have selected an environment better suited to his purpose. In any case he did select it, as we shall see, and if anything is to-day well remembered about him it is that theatre and the Wargrave Theatricals, as they were called, with which he delighted to amuse his friends and in which he himself was a constant and by no means an indifferent performer.

The year 1787 thus saw Lord Barrymore occupied to the top of his bent ; he set up

housekeeping on a lavish scale ; he formed a racing stable ; he took the Wargrave house and initiated, although in a rather tentative way, his theatrical activities ; and he made his first appearance on the Turf at Newmarket, under the auspices of the Duchess of Bolton, who seems to have liked the young man as much as she did racing and gambling.

One of the first matches he made was with a horse called Yarico (which he had purchased from Colonel O'Kelly, the one-time owner of the famous *Eclipse*) against Copernicus, owned by a Mr. Davis ; and as in the case of four other earlier events, he won. Nor was this merely a matter of chance. Although so young a man and a novice at the sport, Barrymore was one of those whose quickness of apprehension and rapid power of making themselves masters of the details of anything in which they are interested, was remarkable ; and he soon evinced a judgment and knowledge of the *arcana* of horse-racing which astonished, and no doubt a little amazed, those older hands whose long experience was yet not sufficient to make them superior to the lightning-like apprehension of the newcomer.

At first, therefore, Barrymore's experience of the Turf was *couleur de rose*. He had justified his large expenditure and his reliance on his own judgment ; and he emerges, before he had actually come of age, as an authority on racing and a successful owner.

But there were other ways in which he was able to spend and lose money, apart from the fact that his luck or cunning at racing did not, as the years went on, remain with him. He began to play cards, and fell among sharpers ; he began to haunt the *coulisses*, and fell among more attractive thieves ; and he even embarked on what may be termed theatrical management, although it was but a circus with which he first identified himself.

This venture was a curious one for a man of position in those days. The Royal Circus, in St. George's Fields, which occupied ground on which the Surrey Theatre was subsequently built, had been opened in or about the year 1782, in opposition to Astley's, an opposition which its promoters found difficult to make really formidable. It was probably at this juncture that Lord Barrymore was induced to put money into the concern ; but although all kinds of novelties were tried, the public never seems to have taken to the Royal Circus, and it gradually went from bad to worse, and Barrymore at length disassociated himself from it ; not, one may conjecture, without having considerably burned his fingers, as did, no doubt, both Hughes and Dibdin who originally opened it.¹

In the meanwhile there was no abatement in the young Earl's racing activities ; and we hear of him during this year (1788) giving what were then

¹ It was rebuilt in 1799, and burnt down in 1805. There is a reference to it in the *Rejected Addresses*.

enormous prices for horses, and distinguishing himself by a successful record of winning events.

This year marked, too, an event in the Barrymore family. The Earl's sister, Caroline, had been on a visit to France, and met, in Paris, Louis Pierre Drummond, Comte de Melfort, great grandson of James II.'s adherent the Earl of Melfort. The Comte fell violently in love with the young lady, whose attractions counter-balanced her gift of fiery language, and he married her at St. Germain. He had money, some £20,000 it is said, and when he came over to England subsequently he seems to have taken a prominent share in Barrymore's pastimes. The marriage, I may state, was subsequently annulled ; although on what grounds is not recorded. Lady Melfort was almost as fond of acting as was her brother, and in 1790 we find Walpole recording seeing both of them performing in *The Beaux' Stratagem* at Squib's Auction Room, which Barrymore had taken and converted into a theatre. Whether his brothers Henry and Augustus shared the same bent I don't know ; but certainly in other respects they not merely emulated their elder but are said to have surpassed him in mischief and profligacy, without possessing certain redeeming qualities which distinguished Barrymore himself. All sorts of stories are told of their pranks, from the abstracting and pawning of Angelos' valuable flute to other even less forgivable offences against

decency and good taste. In many of these a certain German, known as 'Joe the Conjuror,' was their abettor and instigator. He remained their *fidus Achates* in folly, till one day the pair, having made him drunk, cut off his hair which he wore in the form of a pig-tail, an incident which promptly ended the association.¹

¹ Angelo's *Reminiscences*.



CHAPTER II

THE EARL OF BARRYMORE (*Continued*)

AT Wargrave “the Earl of Barrymore has a temporary residence; adjoining the house an elegant theatre has lately been erected, in which dramatic performances are often exhibited by his Lordship and other performers, for the amusement of their friends.” So writes Archibald Robertson in his book on the Great Bath Road,¹ published in 1792. The place Barrymore took was, indeed, but a small one, but it stood, as it still stands, conveniently on the high road to Henley, and had, as it still has, its lawn sloping gracefully to the river’s edge. It was sufficient as a summer residence but was so small that Lord Barrymore’s guests were obliged to find accommodation elsewhere in the village. Robertson says the theatre adjoined the house. This is not quite correct, for as a matter of fact it was on the opposite side of the road and occupied a piece of ground which is still pointed out as its site.

¹ *A Topographical Survey of the Great Road from London to Bath and Bristol*, by Archibald Robertson. 2 vols. 1792.

Lord Barrymore had been in the occupation of the Wargrave abode some time before he erected this miniature play-house ; and the performances he and his friends gave took place in a barn which either belonged to the property he had acquired or was rented for this special purpose.

As there was no stabling, or at least not of such a size as was required by the new owner, he was obliged to hire some at Twyford, about two miles away ; an inconvenient arrangement but the best that could be made at first.

He had no sooner settled such matters than he began actively to convert the barn into a theatre. But this was not all he did. He happened to learn that a gentleman at Shiplake, no other, indeed, than Henry Constantine Jennings, the well-known owner of that famous piece of sculpture—the Dog of Alcibiades—wished to sell his pack of hounds and Barrymore forthwith entered into negotiations for the purchase of it ; and having at the same time acquired some stags, he organised a series of stag-hunts on a scale of magnificent ostentation rivalling the well-known establishment at Chantilly. Four negroes used to accompany the pack, dressed in a livery of scarlet and silver, and wound about with those serpentine horns with which the French are fond of arming their hunt-servants. Little Wargrave must have opened its sleepy eyes at such unwonted phenomena as were then being exhibited in its remote fastnesses !

Barrymore was nothing if not decorative, and his liveries, covered with crests ; his numerous carriages ; his string of horses ; his hounds and his stags, doubtless galvanized the village into an existence of open-mouthed wonder ; while the formation of elaborate kennels must, as giving much local employment, have been regarded with no little satisfaction by the inhabitants. The whole thing was, however, too theatrical to be taken quite seriously by the surrounding gentry. " It was," says a contemporary writer, " matter of temporary concern to neighbouring sportsmen of experience, that an establishment formed at so great and profuse an expense should almost immediately bear all the prominent features of burlesque, and degenerate into an excitement of the most perfect neglect and contempt. For as it was beneath the occasion to institute a chase with less than majestic dignity, so it was determined that no game inferior to red deer should become the object of pursuit."

We read of a paddock, surrounded by a high paling, being acquired for the reception of the quarry. The trouble seems to have been in obtaining the latter ; and success was only very partial, when by dint of advertisement and large payments a few specimens of red deer were finally obtained.

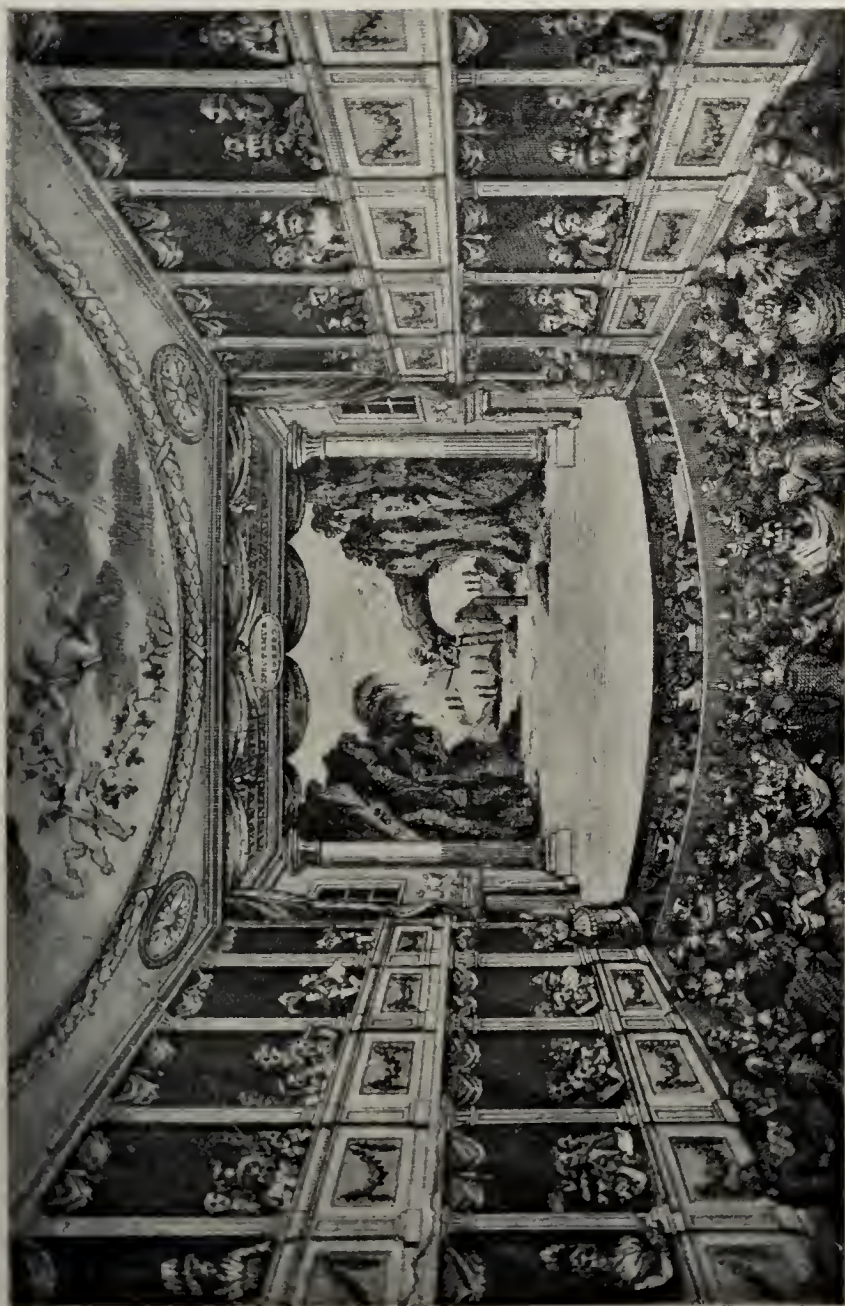
The author I have quoted gives some amusing details of the first hunt, at which the quarry could

by no means be separated from the horses, with whom it seems to have felt itself safe; and of another occasion when the stag took to swimming the river so constantly that the company were obliged continually to be *ferried* from one side of the Thames to the other; and still of a third when the writer rather complacently indicates that he and the hounds were alone in the running: "Under such discomfoting circumstances as general neglect," he adds, "the whole of this picture was buried in oblivion; finally terminating his lordship's career in stag-hunting, a sport to which, in fact, he never displayed either in his eagerness or his riding any enthusiastic attachment, more than he might think immediately necessary to blazon forth the character and completion of an universal sportsman."¹

However, the young Earl seems to have continued the "splendour of retinue and magnificence of equipage," and to have added to it, at a very large cost, a team of greys, lately the property of Sir John Lade, that famous 'whip' and sporting baronet of the period, with which he was wont, later, to astonish the inhabitants of Brighton, as we shall see.

In the meanwhile his Thespian activities continued unabated, and while he and his friends were disporting themselves in the temporary theatre formed out of the old barn, a brand new theatre

¹ Pasquin's *Life of Barrymore*.



THE WARGRAVE THEATRE.

(see p. 162)

was in course of erection opposite his cottage residence. This building was modelled on the old Opera House in the Haymarket, and its arrangements were in the hands of a Mr. Cox, formerly of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden. The picture here reproduced will give an idea of the appearance of its interior ; and those who considered it the handsomest and best-appointed little play-house then in existence were probably not far wrong in their opinion. Everything that could tend to completeness was, regardless of cost, supplied. The scenery was produced by the well-known scene-painters, Young and Emmanuel ; the costumes were on the most lavish and gorgeous scale—the wardrobe costing no less than two thousand pounds. Adjoining the theatre was a large retiring room or *foyer*, where refreshments could be obtained *gratis* and where the guests were able, between the acts, to wonder at the decorations and to count, if they had time, the innumerable manifestations of their princely host's armorial bearings emblazoned on every side. Altogether Lord Barrymore is said to have spent no less than sixty thousand pounds on this toy.

There were two managers of the Wargrave Theatre : John Edwin, the younger, and J. W. Williams, better known by his pseudonym of Anthony Pasquin, a man of various attainments but of unkempt and untidy appearance, whose satiric gifts both in writing and conversation were

well known and whom Barrymore no doubt enlisted in his service on account of his amusing talk as well as his intimate knowledge of theatrical men and manners.

The theatre was completed in 1788, and a series of performances were immediately given there which were more or less experimental in their character. It was not till the following year that the new play-house can really be said to have been officially inaugurated, and on January 25th a special performance took place there, to which all the countryside was invited as well as many of Barrymore's friends from London. Mrs. Lybbe-Powys records going to a subsequent performance in the same week. "Lord Barrymore," she writes, "had the last summer (1788) built a very elegant playhouse at Wargrave, and had a Mr. Young from the Opera House to paint the scenes which were extremely pretty. His lordship and friends perform'd three nights one week. We were all there the 31st. It was extremely full of the neighbouring families. The play was 'The Confederacy' and 'The Midnight Hour.' . . . The cake, negus, and all kinds of wines were brought between the acts; the cake alone one night they say cost £20. The ball and supper on the Wednesday very elegant, as March¹ had orders to get everything possible. A service of plate was sent from London for the occasion. We hear his Lordship is going

¹ The proprietor of the Red Lion, at Henley.

to build a ball and supper room adjoining his theatre."

Later, in August, we find the Lybbe-Powyses again at Wargrave, when *The Beaux' Stratagem* and *The Rump* were performed, and "His Lordship acted 'Scrub' amazingly well;" and again, in the following January, when the theatre was very crowded by a brilliant company which included the splendid host's intimate friend, the Duchess of Bolton, the Cravens, Poyntzs, Lord Inchiquin, General Conway and Lady Ailesbury, from Park Place near at hand, besides a large contingent of the local families.

'Anthony Pasquin,' who knew more about all these things than anyone, wrote a short biography of Lord Barrymore after his death, and in that curious and interesting little book he gives not only a list of the plays performed at Wargrave but a complete list of the amateurs and professionals who took part in them. Lists of such things are not generally very exhilarating, but in this instance the reader may like to know who disported themselves in conjunction with Barrymore, and what plays were presented at the beautiful little theatre on whose site cabbages and potatoes are now raised. Thus the plays recorded by Pasquin as being performed are *The Constant Couple*, *Every Man in his Humour*, *The Battle of Hexham*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*; the farces were *Hob in the Well*, *Miss in her 'Teens*,

The Padlock, The Guardian, The Apprentice, The Mayor of Garrat, The Poor Soldier, and The Midnight Hour; while the pantomimes included *Robinson Crusoe, Don Juan, and Blue Beard*.

Among the amateurs who supported Barrymore were his two brothers, the Hon. Lucius Cary, the Revd. Mr. Blackstone, Messrs. Ximenes (of Bear Place, Twyford), Nassau, Impey, Wade, Davis, Pollard, Collins, Angelo, and J. W. Williams (Anthony Pasquin), and Captains Davies, Quarme, Tayler, Davis, Wathen, Middleton, and Dives. In the ranks of the professionals we find several famous names. Thus the ladies were Mrs. Goodall, Mrs. Rivers, Mrs. Horebrow, Mrs. Rock, Mrs. Norton, Miss Chapman, Madame Delphini, Mrs. Hall, and Mrs. Maddox; and the men, Palmer, the two Bannisters, Johnstone, Incledon, Munden, Williams, Palmer, Whitfield, Moses Kean, Hollingsworth, Rock, Richards and Le Brun. Charles Delphini was the superintendent of the pantomimes, and Thomas Carter musical director and composer; while Mr. Vestris and Madame Hilsberg were among the professional dancers.

It will thus be seen that many as were the amateurs who acted here, they were well reinforced by professionals, not a few of whom were stars of theatrical magnitude. Indeed the completeness of the *personnel* equalled the elaborate character of the scenery and the costumes.

With regard to Barrymore's own dramatic ability

there seems little doubt. Selwyn may have been pleased to call him an *étourdi*, and it is obvious that in some respects he merited the designation ; but as an actor he was excellent, with the excellence that comes from natural histrionic gifts and a constant determination to improve them. In 1788 he had appeared at the Brighton Theatre as Captain Bobadil, and had been anything but a success, even with the friendly presence of the Prince of Wales to give him confidence ; but after that, especially in his own play-house, he continually distinguished himself ; and had he been living in these days he would no doubt have become a professional with little to learn from professionals.

The theatre was, indeed, the ruling passion of his life, but it must not be supposed that he concentrated his whole attention on it although it occupied so much of his time and energy, and absorbed so much of his money. He was a young man of many interests, of restless energy, of a variety of eccentric occupations, and he flitted from one to another with an ardour which nothing seemed to weary or abate.

As we have seen, he had already distinguished himself as an owner on the Turf, he had even emulated Lord March by riding one of his own horses at Ascot in the May of 1788 ; he was forever organising some merry outing with his friends, and when at Wargrave would arrange innumerable pic-nics which consisted of driving or riding to

some selected spot, and there digging up wines and dainties already buried by his servants and whose hiding-places were duly marked for exhumation ; or would go, accompanied by a waggon in which a tent was packed, and, arriving at some desirable spot, would set it up and partake of a collation, pleasingly imagining himself and his friends to be denizens of a Thames-side Forest of Arden.

Such amusements as these were his more innocent delights—appropriate to the sylvan surroundings in which he found himself at Wargrave and its vicinity ; just as were his cricketing exploits and his love of driving, although in the latter the recklessness of his character often exhibited itself, to the terror and not infrequent discomfiture of others using the King's highway. The freaks in which he indulged with his brothers and friends as dare-devil as himself were continual, and as various as were his moods. Angelo, who knew him intimately and was at one time a constant companion, and sometimes a victim, of his frolics, has left us some amusing vignettes of the young peer's vagaries which often communicated themselves to his companions, who did their best to emulate him in dare-devil escapades.

“ The Wargrave amusements,” he writes, “ were not confined to Lord Barrymore's caprices and eccentricities only, but often extended to the guests who were on a visit there. Every morning

at breakfast some new frolic kept us 'on the *qui vive*, and the one who proposed the most preposterous was considered the hero of the day. I got the credit for being the first who recommended the dinners *al fresco* in the woods; *nem. con.* was the general cry, all looking forward to good eating and drinking." . . . "No Jacques among us," he adds, "nor 'under the shades of melancholy boughs,' but, 'merry men all.'"

Sometimes the delights of the table, in the more conventional environment of Lord Barrymore's own abode, were prolonged well into the following day; and one such occasion is recorded by Angelo, when the host, having made a bet with the Duke of Bedford of £5,000 on the result of the Bedford election, untiringly kept his convives up till nine o'clock in the morning, drinking and otherwise passing the time till the result of the polling was brought to him.

Barrymore's caprices were indulged in most places where he happened to be, but at Wargrave they were specially noticeable: "being grand monarch there, and in a village," says Angelo, "his frolics far exceeded his London vagaries. In inventing and planning eccentricities none could keep pace with him," and the writer proceeds to tell how Barrymore, on a certain warm day, proposed that he and his male guests should strip, and *en chemise*, perambulate the street of astonished Wargrave—which they promptly did. In fact

anything that came into his inventive head or into those of his companions, be it never so *outré*, was sure to be hailed with delight and carried out, so long as it was sufficiently novel and sufficiently daring.

In London his audacities were less pronounced, or perhaps it was because they were less noticeable, that they have been so regarded. Here is an example of one of the methods he took to *épater le bourgeoisie*, even in the metropolis.

“ Seated after dinner, at eleven o’clock, on one of the hottest evenings in July, he proposed that the whole party should go to Vauxhall. The carriage being ordered, it was directly filled inside, and the others outside, with more wine than wit, made no little noise through the streets. We had not been long at Vauxhall when Lord Barrymore called out to a young clergyman, some little distance from us, who, when he approached and was asked ‘ Have you had any supper ? ’ to our surprise answered, ‘ Vy, as how, my Lord, I have not as yet had none.’ A waiter passing by at the time, Lord Barrymore said, ‘ You know me, let that gentleman have whatever he calls for,’ when he told the parson to fall to, and to call for as much arrack punch as he pleased, ‘ Thank ye, my Lord,’ he said, ‘ for I begins to be hungry, and I don’t care how soon I pecks a bit.’ The clergyman was a certain Tom Hooper, one of the well-known pugilists of the day, who had been dressed up by

Barrymore, to be in readiness should he get involved in any dispute and require professional aid. Later, when the arrack punch had begun to do its work, Barrymore and his party, Henry Barry, Lord Falkland, Sir Francis Molineux, Angelo, and the rest, observed much commotion going on around the orchestra, and proceeding to find out what was astir, discovered Hooper, in the middle of an improvised ring, stalking up and down, and daring anyone to come on and have a bout at fisticuffs with him. Presently a certain tall Irishman, named McCarthy, stepped up to him, and exclaimed : ‘ You rascal, you are Hooper the boxer ; if you do not leave the gardens this instant, I’ll kick you out ; ’ ” whereupon the crowd, taking heart of grace, closed in upon the disguised pugilist who beat a hasty retreat, and was, concludes Angelo, discovered at five o’clock in the morning crouching behind Barrymore’s carriage, with the coachman’s great coat covering his clerical attire !

As may well be imagined, it was not long before the Barrymores began to receive that sort of attention from a sedulous public which their vagaries to some extent warranted ; and soon there were being attributed to them, and especially to the young Earl, every kind of dissipation and excess which popular imagination could conceive. There was much ground for the reputation they earned, even if many of the legends which clustered around their names were groundless. At a period when

the free and easy, full-blooded eighteenth century had arrived at a kind of high-water mark, they floated and splashed on the top of the flood ; and in later days, Raikes writing of them could say with truth that they were conspicuous among even the most notorious *roués* of the day in London ; although when he adds that the Earl was foremost in every species of dissipation he is not in agreement with contemporaries more familiar with the Barry family, and who, as I have said, considered that his brothers outdid him in profligacy.

The fact is Barrymore's high spirits and robust constitution required a variety of outlets, and the directions these took were such as in our more sober days fill us with a mild amazement. One visualises him as in a constant state of restless activity, turning from one project to another with an energy which had it not been thus dissipated might have been productive of remarkable achievement in some fruitful direction. As it was he expended on his theatre and his stables, his women and his wine, his freaks and his wagers, a latent force that might have directed armies or ruled nations. Some have thought that had his life been extended he would, when the ebullience of youth had spent itself, have entered on a more sober and better regulated course of existence. Rather, I think, would he have emulated Old Q in a determined pursuit of pleasure and self-gratification ; and perhaps his early and tragic death is one of

the greatest advantages his reputation could have met with.

The mention of Old Q reminds me that among the many points of similarity observable between the characters of these two contemporary rakes, was a passion for weird and curious wagers. It was an age of such things ; an age when quite reputable personages indulged in bets of all kinds on all sorts of unlikely things. Old Q, one remembers, was found on one occasion, laying the odds with another sportsman as to which should produce a man with the bigger gastronomic capability ; but Barrymore once went further. Old Q's man was at least required to eat ordinary food, although a prodigious quantity of the same ; but Barrymore once laid a bet with the Duke of Bedford (with whom we have just found him making a more conventional wager) that he would produce a man who would eat a live cat. The press of the day heard of this disgusting proposal, and quite seriously canvassed the possibilities of its success, even to the extent of quoting instances of a similar class of wager. I imagine that Barrymore, happily, was not successful in discovering anyone ready to attempt such a repulsive feat, as I cannot find any record of the event even being arranged, much less proceeded with.

But if he emulated the Duke of Queensberry in such matters, in another direction he certainly could not quote him as an example. For one of

the things Old Q does not seem to have patronised was the Ring. In those days when prize-fighting was beginning to take on an almost national importance, and bouts between famous pugilists were watched by crowds as interested and critical as those at football and cricket matches are to-day, Old Q exhibited a marked lack of enthusiasm for such displays. Not so Lord Barrymore, who entered into the 'sport' with his customary ardour, and in a short time became as outstanding a patron of pugilism as were the Prince of Wales and his brothers and so many members of what was then called the *ton*.

In the meanwhile his racing activities were more marked than ever, and his skill in riding his own horses (as he not infrequently did) was even surpassed by his capabilities as a handicapper, in which direction he exhibited remarkable acumen and knowledge. Sometimes, however, his reliance on his cleverness in this respect led him into overlooking certain possible difficulties, and one such instance is recorded when he bet the Duke of Bedford (with whom he seems to have been constantly laying wagers) that he would handicap a horse belonging to a third party so that it would beat one of his Grace's horses carrying a certain weight. The challenge was accepted; but only when it was too late did Barrymore find that the owner of the horse refused to allow its handicapping to be made the subject of a wager at all.

The sequel is a curious one, and is thus recorded by Mr. Robinson : ¹

“ As this was a ‘ play ’ or ‘ pay ’ match, the Earl was on the horns of a dilemma, and at once sought the Duke at the Jockey Club, at Newmarket, telling him he was ready to forfeit his stakes. His Grace, however, suggested a compromise. He said he had heard of Lord Barrymore’s powers of epigram, and that if he would produce an example to the Duke’s satisfaction, he would forego the bet. Barrymore was required to write a song on the owner of the horse in question, the first letter of each line to be one contained in his name, with the term ‘ Esquire ’ added as well as his address in London. To this Barrymore agreed, produced the song (not, perhaps, without the aid of ‘ Anthony Pasquin ’), and sang it before a select company of the Jockey Club. And so the affair concluded by Barrymore pocketing the stakes.”

By this time the Earl had become acquainted with the Prince of Wales and his set, probably being first introduced to that effulgent young scapegrace by the Duke of Bedford. Prince ‘ Florizel ’ seems to have taken a liking to his new friend, and when at the Pavilion at Brighton in 1788 received him on terms of special intimacy, arranging with him, during some of the breakfasts they took together, those horse-races on the Steyne (a very

¹ *The Last Earls of Barrymore.*

different place from what it is to-day) in which Barrymore rode his own animals either against his brother Henry, or Mr. Lee who rode the Prince's mounts ; the Comte de Melfort being also one of the jockeys.

Earlier in the same year we find Barrymore at Chelmsford Races, and also at those held at Lewes, at which place he competed in jockeyship with the veteran Sir John Lade (whose niece by marriage became, later, Lady Barrymore), whom he succeeded in beating ; as he did on another occasion a horse owned by Charles James Fox, but not, it need hardly be said, ridden by its proprietor. Indeed, this initial year of Barrymore's Turf experiences was a singularly lucky one for him ; for in addition to such successes he managed to defeat no less redoubtable an antagonist than the Duke of Queensberry, and a hardly less notable one, Lord Clermont, all within a single week in October ; while a number of other successes which he achieved in this and the following month must have fully justified him, in his own eyes, in the vast expense to which he had gone in setting up a racing stable on more than princely lines.

It was, no doubt, when elated by one of these victories that he is said, while one day coming from his stud into the High Street at Newmarket, to have suddenly begun to call out ' O yes,' ' O yes,' ' O yes,' in the regulation manner of a town-crier, and when a crowd had collected, to have continued

to vociferate : “ Who wants to buy a horse that can walk five miles an hour, trot eighteen and gallop thirty ? ” On several of the bystanders replying that they were more than prepared to do this, he exclaimed, “ Then depend upon it, if I hear of such a prodigy for sale, I will let you all know of it ; ” and walked off.

Let us walk off with him from Newmarket to distant Wargrave, where his theatricals are again in full swing, and where the young Earl trod the boards with as much *aplomb* and success as he had bestridden horses on the famous heath.

We have seen that the Wargrave Theatre was inaugurated in the January of 1789, and I have said something of the performances there and of those who took part in them. It would appear that in order “ to preserve good manners among so large a body of people ” (the phrase is Anthony Pasquin’s), Barrymore instituted a comic court of justice before which anyone who had been indiscreet or had “ violated the duties of subordination ” during the day was duly arraigned and tried. Of this mock court Pasquin was Lord Chief Justice and Barrymore “ Counsel for the Majesty of Decency ” (could the Comic Spirit go further ?) ; while others occupied posts as jurymen and officers of the court, Captain Tayler undertaking the duties of Counsel for the Prisoner. In the list is found the name of Charles Delphini, as Crier of the Court.

This Delphini or Delpini was a well-known 'Pierrot' who had been associated with the Royal Circus, referred to earlier, where Barrymore had first met him. He was a comical fellow, who used to amuse the Prince of Wales vastly by his impertinence and broken English; and he and his wife appear to have been supervisors of the Earl's household and theatre respectively.¹ Mrs. Delphini was a woman of much commonsense, and Pasquin, referring to her position of housekeeper to Barrymore at Wargrave, remarks on one occasion that he verily believed her conduct had been highly advantageous to her employer; although to be sure it required more than her limited powers to mitigate the disastrous effects of his mania for spending money.

But Barrymore when at Wargrave was not wholly occupied with theatrical matters; although, no doubt, they were what chiefly interested him. He was constantly entertaining relays of guests, ranging from the Prince of Wales, who came hither on August 21st, 1789, from Brighton, and was put up for the evening (he left at five o'clock on the following morning) at what is now Wargrave Manor (then belonging to Mr. Hill, Cowper's friend), Lord Barrymore's own residence being far too exiguous for so illustrious a guest.

This honour was paid by the Prince of Wales

¹ They lived at Wargrave in the house now known as 'The Croft,' then a small cottage, but since enlarged by successive owners.

for a special reason, for August 21st, 1789, marked the day of his host's majority, when he became his own master (if he can ever be said to have been anything else), and the master of £20,000 a year. As may be imagined, Barrymore determined to celebrate the event with all the resources he could command; and little Wargrave was, indeed, *en fête* when its most notable inhabitant came into his kingdom. A gala performance was given in the theatre, when a prologue, specially composed for the occasion, was spoken by Angelo, and an epilogue was written and recited by Mr. Blackstone. The play was followed by a grand masquerade ball, "honoured," says Pasquin, "by the presence of the Prince of Wales, and all the beauty and fashion of the surrounding counties." Of course Mrs. Lybbe-Powys was there, and this is what she has to say of the gorgeous scene.

"On Friday we went to Wargrave; were not to be there till twelve, on account of the play being later that night, as they began later for the Prince of Wales. A box had been built for his Royal Highness, and a ball-room and elegant supper-room out of it, just finished. After the play the Prince and company entered the ball-room. His Royal Highness began, and they danced two dances before supper. . . . The supper was announced at one. The circular room one of the prettiest for such an occasion I ever saw; the tables round the circle set off the most elegant entertainment that possibly

could be, to the greatest advantage. The dome was lighted with colour'd lamps, and the side-board, likewise circular, under the dome, at which no more than six of his lordship's own servants attended, and with such uncommon cleverness that no one of the company but had everything wished for in an instant. We fancied there would have been a separate table for the Prince, but he set himself down amongst the rest without the least ceremony, seem'd quite free, easy, and perfectly good-humoured the whole evening, talk'd to almost the whole company, took particular care to turn everyone by the hand in going down the dances, which accomplishment, to be sure, he particularly excels in, more than most others. . . . He retired after two more dances, and set off in his post-chaise for York. . . . We got home about six, much indeed pleased with the evening's entertainment."

Other festivities took place, although not on so lavish a scale, and we find the diarist going, in the following November, to what Lord Barrymore on the card of invitation termed "a little dance," which she enjoyed vastly, especially as in addition to the dancing Lord Barrymore and his brothers and Mr. Bertie sang "some good catches" after supper. The Lybbe-Powys party did not get home till between six and seven the next morning. The countryside, under the guidance of the young Earl, was becoming quite dissipated. Masqued balls

were a favourite diversion among the Wargrave set, and one given in January was honoured by the presence of the Prince of Wales, when there were, we are told, nearly five hundred present. *The Morning Herald* for January 11th, 1790, gives an account of the proceedings, which, as was the case with everything arranged by Barrymore, was on a scale of almost regal magnificence. Many other such entertainments are recorded, and between them a constant flow of theatrical representations.

On March 16th Mrs. Lybbe-Powys mentions seeing *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, "amazingly well performed," at the Wargrave Theatre. This is the final reference to it in her journal, and there is a significant N.B. appended to the entry : "This was the last play acted, as the beautiful theatre was soon after taken down."

Although it has been convenient to set down here what the lady has to say about the Wargrave theatricals, which has carried us on to the year 1792, we are really only as yet in 1789, with Lord Barrymore come of age and into his large fortune, and everything smiling on his extravagant and princely profusion.

As may well be supposed, he now launched out in still greater expenses, and the amazing thing is that his fortune, large as it was, should, even for the few years it did, have withstood such immense and constant drains upon it. He added to his already considerable racing establishment; he

gave innumerable splendid entertainments ; he was occupied in building his new house in Piccadilly ; and he gambled and spent money in other ways with a recklessness which has only perhaps been equalled in later times by the Marquess of Hastings and the egregious Benzon, the Jubilee Plunger, as he was called, of Monte Carlo fame.



CHAPTER III

THE EARL OF BARRYMORE (*Continued*)

IF Lord Barrymore can be termed idle in one sense of the word, he certainly did not deserve the appellation in another, for he was constantly devising new and unexpected methods of amusement, which in themselves kept him perpetually employed. We have seen him occupied with racing and hunting, with theatrical performances, and in organising all kinds of entertainments for his friends, and to all of these he brought his personal attention and an energy and resource which, directed in other channels, might have enabled him to make a serious reputation for himself

In the midst of a variety of other pleasurable employments the founding of all sorts of clubs occupied a place; ephemeral clubs they proved to be and often enough organised under ridiculous rules and regulations, but he gave to their inauguration and development an amount of energy worthy of a better cause, and quite surprising in one of so mercurial a temperament.

One of them was called 'The Bothering Club,' and its meetings were held at the Barrymore residence in Wargrave; another was 'The Warble Club,' which met at a tavern called 'The World's End' at Leatherhead, and its character may be realised when we know the nature of some of its rules, one of which was "That there be no more members admitted into the room than it will hold," and another, "That every member who has two ideas, shall be obliged to give one to his neighbour;" yet another, "That if any member has more sense than another he be kicked out of the club." All the rules are, of course, utterly absurd, but at least the wording of some of them shows that "kind of school-boy wit which characterised their framer." It was one of those jovial, noisy, hard-drinking fraternities at which Barrymore loved to preside and Anthony Pasquin was delighted to play the fool.

There were other clubs of a not dissimilar character of which Barrymore was a member, and very often the founder; the *Je-ne-sais-quoi* Club, for instance, sometimes known as 'The Star and Garter,' because its meetings were held at the well-known tavern of that name in Pall Mall, of which the Prince of Wales was also a member and, when there was a song going, anything but a silent one. Another was the Blue Bottle Club, later called 'The Humbugs,' of which Colonel Hanger and Captain Morris were leading lights; and the

'Two o'Clock Club,' so named because its members foregathered at that hour in the morning.

It is remarkable how fond young (and, for the matter of that, old) men of fashion were at that time of bursting at the least provocation into song and minstrelsy. It was a harmless but noisy amusement, and it may well be that the reputation for conviviality earned by that period was accentuated by the fact that members of clubs took their pleasures at the tops of their voices, and thus earned a reputation for rowdiness which was really often only vocal boisterousness.

High and exuberant spirits must have such an outlet, and Barrymore, like the Prince with whom he often consorted, could sing a song well and delighted in exhibiting his accomplishment. But you cannot keep on singing either solos or choruses without becoming thirsty; and I am inclined to trace the love of the bottle which was so predominant at this period to the indulgence in song. To-day if two young bloods as sober as judges perambulated the streets singing the swinging chorus of a music-hall, there would hardly be a householder whose peace they disturbed who would not believe them drunk. So has a puritan influence obsessed a self-conscious nation. In Georgian times when people thought far more of themselves and less of what was thought of them such considerations never entered their heads, and much of the light and leading of the country burst

into uncontrollable melody, and the Prince of all the land led them on.

Barrymore was the very man for a chorus. His whole life was occupied in making himself heard, and if he preferred doing it at midnight in village streets or in club-rooms, when the fumes of wine went up in conjunction with the heated breath of roysterers, instead of pouring it out in the rolling periods of legislative oratory, he may, by many, be considered to have been less mischievously employed than he might have been. Certain it is that he was only once tempted to try his powers in more solemn assemblies, and although he did actually become a member of the House of Commons there is no evidence that he ever opened his mouth there. Indeed, his only public connection was when he was induced to accept a commission in the Berkshire militia, a position in which he indicated a zeal which, had he lived, might have proved a stepping-stone to promotion and perhaps (with 1815 not many years away) fame. For he was just one of those young men who, one cannot doubt, would, like the dandies in Spain, have fought bravely and well. But Fate was always against him, and as it had loaded him with benefits it also prevented him from having time in which to reverse the errors of a wild and unrestrained youth.

During the year 1789 Barrymore had a few rather notable racing successes, among them being

that match between his horse 'Highlander' and one owned by the Prince of Wales, called 'Thorn,' in which he was the victor. Besides this victory he beat, with 'Jericho,' Charles James Fox's 'Braggadocio'; defeated the Duke of Queensberry's 'Burgundy,' the favourite, with his horse 'Toss,' and rode his gelding 'Tongs' in a match with his brother Henry and his brother-in-law the Comte de Melfort. In this race Melfort's horse came in first; however Barrymore, who was second, successfully claimed the victory on the grounds that he had been crossed by the winner.

But he appears chiefly during this time to have concentrated his energies on his theatre, and it was to increase its attractions that he now engaged Delphini (whom we have already met) and who had already made a name in London. He and his wife were domiciled at Wargrave, where the latter became housekeeper to Lord Barrymore and seems to have done her best to regulate, as well as might be, the hitherto unregulated expenditure of her employer. As I have already remarked, her conduct was very advantageous in this respect; and had Lord Barrymore's outgoings been confined to his household, even this humble instrument might have at least staved off the day when his resources began to fail. But it was far otherwise, and on every side his money passed through his hands like water. Nothing troubled him, neither the expostulations of friends nor the references to and

criticisms of his conduct in the daily news-sheets. So long as he enjoyed the passing moment and had sufficient on his mind to keep him from reflection, he was quite happy. He kept on improving, at a great cost, his theatre ; he added to his stud of racehorses by costly purchases from Sir John Lade and others ; he increased the number of his hunters, urged thereto by his brother Henry who, in 1790, set up a pack of harriers which he hunted, turn and turn about, with Barrymore's not too successful staghounds.

Nor was his interest in pugilism in any way abated, and we read of matches being arranged by him between various noted boxers. One of these, an encounter in which Hooper and Watson were pitted against one another, created no small stir at the time, and resulted in an unequivocal victory for the former—' The Tinman ' as he was called, who had long been Barrymore's pugilistic tutor. It is said that the sporting peer won no less than £25,000 over this event ; a sum which must no doubt have incited him to fresh extravagances.

Having tried racing and hunting, play-acting and boxing, and driving, and heaven only knows how many other outlets for his superabundant energy, Barrymore bethought him of a new outlet for his prowess, and on April 16th, 1790, we find him one of the protagonists in a running match, in Kensington Gardens, against a certain Captain Parkhurst mounted on a horse. The course was

only thirty yards straight, then round a tree and back to the post; and the match was to be the best out of four heats. It took place in the presence of the Prince of Wales and a distinguished company, and resulted in a draw, both competitors winning two heats.

This event seems to have incited the Earl to further efforts in the same direction, and he endeavoured to arrange a match somewhat on the same lines against the Bath coach, from Hyde Park corner to Hammersmith. This never materialised, however, apparently because Barrymore was unable to enlist the interest of the ring sufficiently to make it financially worth while.

The cumulative effect of these varied manifestations of sporting energy resulted in Lord Barrymore's name becoming as notorious as was Old Q's. Indeed the following paragraph, which appeared in one of the newspapers, indicates that he had outsoared the doings of that notorious personage, at least for a time, in the public eye.

"The present age, we are told, has to boast of a young nobleman whose splendid abilities far exceed the late Earl of March's; ¹ this young lord can drive four or six horses in hand from morn to eve. For contriving, destroying, purchasing, and disposing, none can equal him. He is the coachman, the player, the spendthrift, and indeed everything but what his fortune entitles him to

¹ Late, because he had become Duke of Queensberry in 1778.

be. If none excel him, it is hoped that none will attempt to equal him. Beware, ye youth, how you are entrapped into ruin by bad example."

Such a warning as that contained in the last line would have had little effect on Lord Barrymore who, says a rather severe critic, "of all the Prince of Wales's dissolute companions, seems to have been the most abandoned."¹ As a proof of his outrageous conduct the writer sets down the following example: "The Prince one night, at his (Barrymore's) instigation, rushed out with a party from the orgies of the Pavilion, fantastically dressed in table cloths, with napkins round their heads, and making strange noises, to frighten the old women of Brighton out of their senses or their sleep."

This brings us to Barrymore's other vagaries at Brighton where, about this time, all the Prince's world was accustomed to congregate, sunning themselves in the warmth of the sunlit sea or in the hotter factitious rays emanating from that Chinese pleasure house—the 'Florizel's Folly,' of which Mr. Ashton has written the history.

I shall have much to say about this hot-bed of iniquity in the succeeding volume, and so need not here enlarge on the subject, concerning which it is only necessary to state that it did not begin to assume its oriental appearance till the first decade of the new century, and that as it was in

¹ Wallace, *Life of George IV.* 1831.

Barrymore's time it presented that rather non-descript air which is frequently found in houses altered and reconstructed from smaller ones, as this was. It was certainly more consistent with its name than was its successor, and not inadequately bore out the remark of the wit (I think it was Sydney Smith) who said it looked as if St. Paul's had visited Brighton and pupped there. The Prince was constantly here from 1783 onwards, but Barrymore does not appear on the scene till seven years later. When he did come, however, he, to use a colloquialism, 'made things hum.'

He took a house in what was originally known as Pavilion Row, but which later became No. 5 The Steyne; Mrs. Fitzherbert's residence was close by, overlooking that large open space which has now been so altered that when we read of horse-races there we are apt to wonder where the course could have been staked out.

In those days everyone who was anyone foregathered at some time in the year at the Brighton which Dr. Johnson had discovered and the Prince of Wales had adopted. There were the Lades, Sir John driving people about and his lady driving many of them away; Colonel Hanger was to be seen with his brother, Lord Coleraine, and Lady Jersey without Lord Jersey; General 'Agamemnon' Dalrymple, and 'Gloomy' Mr. Day, Colonel Tarleton, and 'Parson' Mitchell; Sir Richard and Lady Heron, with their dresses and

manners of a past *régime*, and the Barry brothers with their boisterous horse-play and ceaseless good humour ; while 'Smoaker' Miles superintended the bathing exploits of the Heir Apparent, and Martha Gunn did the same for the fairer portion of those who dabbled in the sea-water.

Barrymore was hardly a young man whose natural temperament required adventitious means to exhilarate it, but his high spirits must have risen some degrees, and his happy-go-lucky ways have taken on some added exuberance, under the influence of the sea-air and the best of good company ; and it is at Brighton that we find him most boisterous and regardless of the conventions. He was here, there, and everywhere—acting at the theatre, riding ponies about the Steyne, organising practical jokes on the astonished and often scandalised inhabitants, drinking deep with the Prince and his other boon companions in the more discreet recesses of the Pavilion. All sorts of stories are told of him here, as they are of those who joined him in his pranks and of the Prince who aided and abetted him.

A favourite diversion was the racing of country girls for smocks. Each 'patron' selected a representative, and one may imagine the sort of thing that went on when the Prince or Barrymore made their choice and went over the 'points' of their favourites. Some of these young would-be Atalantas, unused to such trials of strength, fell

during the races, and their 'owners' were permitted to help them to their feet: the Prince and Barrymore were thus seen running to assist those whom they fancied and who had come to grief, "greatly to the amusement of the neighbourhood." What a prize the winner won, and what was the compensation of those who had done nearly as well, can readily be imagined when the characters of their patrons are remembered.

Pugilism, in which the Prince, influenced by his uncle the Duke of Cumberland, took a special interest, and of which, as we have seen, Barrymore was an outstanding patron, was carried on at Brighton with as much energy as it was in other more recognised seats of the science, until the death, here, of a combatant in one of these encounters gave the Heir Apparent a thorough distaste for such exhibitions.

But practical jokes of all kinds seem to have been the chief delight of Barrymore during his frequent sojourns at Brighton; and the young man who might at one moment have been seen strolling about the Steyne in the royal train, or on another assisting at Sunday concerts and card-parties at the Pavilion or in the house of the elect, or on yet another jumping through a blazing hoop and "setting the audience in a roar" at the play-house, was often, in the intervals of such activities, organising or taking part in some ridiculous frolic whose point not infrequently relied for its

excellence on the discomfiture of the innocent and unoffending. Once a tragic end nearly attended one of these puerilities.

Having obtained a coffin, Barrymore and some of his friends placed one of his footmen in it, and having removed the lid, stood it up in front of a doorway, rang the bell, and awaited events at a safe distance. The maid-servant who answered the summons, seeing, as she thought, a dead body in the coffin, uttered a piercing shriek and fainted. The household aroused by her cry, and imagining that burglars were trying to get in, rushed to the door, armed with anything that first came to hand, but the master of the house brought his pistol, and promptly discharged it at the supposed corpse. By the greatest luck the bullet only escaped the footman's head by an inch, and he was able to scramble out and get away, leaving the empty coffin as a clue to the perpetrators.

This undertaking, as it may not inaptly be called, was not the first of such freaks, Barrymore having tried the trick on previous occasions, although in those cases the coffin was merely filled with a dummy, and except for frightening servant-girls out of their senses no actual harm was likely to occur. The record of such doings is not particularly interesting in the retrospect, however amusing their perpetration may have been to those taking part in them. They are in the same category as the overturning of Charleys in their boxes and the

wrenching off of door-knockers, by which the more frolicsome of an exuberant generation got rid of their superabundant energy ; a similar exposition of rakishness as was exhibited by another Irishman, the Marquis of Waterford of a later day, to the scandal and astonishment of all.

But such things did not exhaust Barrymore's activities, and when he was not evolving schemes of this kind he was acting at the Brighton theatre, attending the Lewes Races to see his horses running, and often riding them himself, not without several successes ; as well as taking part in those feats of pedestrianism for which he seems to have had a particular *flair*, and at which the easy-going Prince was always ready to be a spectator. Of one of these a certain Mr. Bullock was the hero ; at least he won, although by a trick. He was a very big man, and hearing of Barrymore's prowess in the direction mentioned, he made a bet with him that if he was allowed the choice of ground and a thirty-five yards' start, he would beat him in a hundred yards. Barrymore accepted the wager, although the ' track ' was not divulged by Bullock until the day the event was to be decided. It was then found that he had selected one of the narrow alleys in old Brighton. The race began, and Barrymore soon came up with his competitor, but the bulk of the latter and his purposely swinging arms prevented his opponent passing him ; and thus Barrymore was beaten by one of those

stratagems which, curious as it may seem to us now, were then regarded as perfectly legitimate.

With such diversions did the young Earl amuse his friends and himself during his sojourns at Brighton. But these visits were not of long duration, being generally limited to the 'Sussex fortnight,' when the Brighton and Lewes Races were on, and were a kind of annual holiday, in which he recreated himself by doing exactly the same sort of things which engaged his attention in London or Wargrave.

In London his new house was yet a-building, and he was accustomed when there to put up at Wood's Hotel in Covent Garden, and generally to eat such meals as he took by himself, or at which he was the host, at the Bow Street Coffee House, "because," says Anthony Pasquin, "he had the utmost reliance on the integrity of the landlord," which is, I imagine, only another way of saying that the said landlord was more compliant than other bonifaces with the young man's manifold eccentricities and vagaries.

It would appear that after a short time Barrymore's theatrical displays at Wargrave were insufficient for his ambitions in this respect. Like all stage-struck people, in imitation, indeed, of every member of *the* profession, London called him, and his successes among the inhabitants of Berkshire and the neighbouring counties incited him to higher flights—the histrionic conquest of



THE EARL OF BARRYMORE (LEFT) AND CAPTAIN
WATHEN AS 'SCRUB' AND 'ARCHER'
IN *The Beaux' Stratagem*.

(face p. 196)

the capital. He realised, too, that his fame (such as it was) was practically only local; even his London friends could not easily be present at the Wargrave performances without being accommodated for the night, and this was only practicable in the village in a relatively few cases. He therefore determined to acquire a London play-house.

At this moment, what was known as Frantiocini's Marionette Theatre, in Little Burlington Street (it had once been Squib's Auction Room),¹ was available, and with characteristic impetuosity Barrymore took the building; and having thoroughly reconstructed it, opened on July 22nd, 1790, with *The Beaux' Stratagem*. Horace Walpole, who had "heard a good deal about Lord Barrymore and the theatre he is building," as he tells Mary Berry, further writes that young lady on July 20th thus: "I went to carry my niece, Sophia Walpole, home last night from her mother's, and found Little Burlington Street blocked up by coaches. Lord Barrymore, his sister Lady Caroline, and Mrs. Goodall the actress, were performing *The Beaux' Stratagem* in Squib's Auction Room, which his Lordship has converted into a theatre. I do not know," he adds with the superciliousness he always displays when speaking of that *étourdi* Barrymore, as Selwyn called him, "the rest of the company, nor are you probably curious." Horace no doubt would have been even more disdainful

¹ It is now 22 and 23 Savile Row.

had he known that after the play Barrymore danced a *pas de Russe* with Delphini, although at least one member of the audience considered that they performed it inimitably.

We hear, however, little of this new venture, which I therefore imagine was not a marked success, although as it enabled him, at least for a short time, to exhibit his histrionic powers in the metropolis, Barrymore probably thought it worth the money and time he had expended on its re-decoration and inauguration as his 'London Theatre.' ¹

In the following month he had the satisfaction of appearing on hitherto untrodden boards. We have seen among the professionals who performed at Wargrave the name of John Edwin, Junior. It was this actor who was accorded a benefit at the Richmond Theatre on August 11th, 1790, and Barrymore appeared that evening as Scaramouch in an extravaganza called *Don Juan*. Horace Walpole, laying aside for once his antipathy to the actor-earl, went to see the performance: "Last night," he writes to Lord Strafford, "the Earl of Barrymore was so humble as to perform a buffoon-dance and act Scaramouch in a pantomime at Richmond for the benefit of Edwin Junr. the

¹ Apropos of these Thespian activities, Madame du Barry came to England in 1791, and Walpole writes to Mary Berry thus: "Though the late Lord Barrymore acknowledged her husband to be of his noble blood, will she own the present Earl for a relation, when she finds him turned strolling player?"

comedian : and I, like an old fool, but calling myself a philosopher that loves to study human nature in all its disguises, went to see the performance."

There is little doubt that Barrymore's appearance gave a great impetus to the success of Edwin's benefit, if it did not actually cause it ; for not only did many of the local people crowd to the theatre to see the strolling player, as Walpole terms him, but through Barrymore's influence royal patronage was secured, and it was entirely due to him that the Prince of Wales as well as the Dukes of York and Clarence attended the performance.

With the return of Lord Barrymore to Wargrave the theatrical displays there were revived with increased vigour and a regardlessness of expense which, considering the already enormous drains on his resources, shows how utterly unable he was to realise the true position of his finances. Nor was the theatre the only source of vast outgoings. He organised quite a series of *fêtes* and masquerades which dumbfounded the county by their magnificence. One of these, and the most ostentatious, was to have taken place on his birthday, but the additional temporary buildings he was erecting for it were not ready by that date (August 21st), and it was not till the third week in September that that prolonged entertainment (for the *fête* lasted a whole week) took place, concluding with a *bal masqué* which proved the acme of the revels, and

only lacked the presence of the Prince of Wales to make it perfect.

Mrs. Lybbe-Powys was there, and has left her record of the evening's amusement. "All of us," she writes, "excepting my brother and Caroline, were at Lord Barrymore's masqued ball; for our neighbours, finding the last year's had been conducted with such propriety, had all agreed to go, if we did. Our party consisted of the Park (Henley), Fawley Court, Culham Court, the Winfords, and our own families. Got there by eleven, and home between six and seven. I may say we were very highly entertained. The whole beautiful theatre was laid into a ball-room. The rotunda supper-room, and two others, all decorated with festoons of flowers in the most elegant taste, and everything on the tables that could, I believe, be thought of. Numbers of fancy dresses and many good masques, and a great many black dominoes; my lord and all his party in these, and unmasked (except at times when in droll characters); Mr. Powys, myself, and our two sons in black dominoes. The company in general unmasked in about two hours, and almost all at supper. The Prince and friends were to have been there, but could not on account of the Duke of Cumberland's death;¹ but he desired it might not be put off. As it was so sudden it was almost impossible to have

¹ He died on the previous September 18th, aged 45; he was third brother of George III.

given all that were invited notice of its being deferred."

Among other things, not recorded by the diarist, was the recitation of a ballad by the Margravine of Anspach (Lady Craven), who performed her task masked, and was accorded a great reception.¹

This super-fête, in which Barrymore seems to have determined to out-do all his other attempts in the same direction, was inaugurated on the 20th of September by a play *The Follies of the Day*, followed by a pantomime which continued during the two following nights. On the 24th there was a grand dinner, supplied by Daubigny, famous in those days as a caterer, at thirty shillings a head, and after that a ball was given at Reading. To the *bal masqué*, with which the festivities concluded, no fewer than five hundred people were invited, and Wargrave was so hard put to it to afford accommodation for all who came, that the strange sight was seen of people changing their dresses, and sleeping, in the carriages which had brought them from distant parts.

If Lord Barrymore was a fool with his money, there is at least this to be said for him, that he gave amusement to many and employment to a small army of retainers and temporary work-people ; and after all he might have done worse.

¹ She once lived at Benham, in Berkshire, and it was probably from there that she came to Wargrave on this occasion.

The year was not to close without a fresh example of this, for in the following November and December he gave two other elaborate balls ; and, as if never tired of improving the amenities of his rooms, he had, for these entertainments, caused the rotunda to be converted into a dancing-room, and the old ball-room into a card-room, where he no doubt tried his luck at Quinze, at which he is said, once, to have lost two thousand eight hundred guineas at a single sitting.

That he was, however, a consistent gambler does not appear. He would on occasion risk large sums at games of chance, and of these Quinze was his favourite ; but he did not possess the temperament of the regular card-player. He was far too volatile and restless to submit to long hours of attention at a card table. When he played he played in the same spirit in which he laid wagers, chiefly for the excitement of the momentary uncertainty attendant on such hazards ; and although he is known to have lost large sums on occasion, such occasions do not seem, happily for him, to have been of frequent occurrence.



CHAPTER IV

THE EARL OF BARRYMORE (*Continued*)



NE might have thought that in view of his numerous activities Barrymore had his hands full enough without seeking new fields of adventure. This, however, was not the case, and the young man who from acting in Wargrave rushed off to act in London and Richmond, who from superintending his stables at Twyford was constantly travelling to Newmarket to look after his stables there, who was now to be found patronising a prize-fight and anon, dressed as a cook, preparing supper for his friends with something of the skill of a professional *chef*, at length succumbed to that last infirmity of noble minds—a desire to enter Parliament.

This curious hankering, which seems as old as original sin, caught him between a dance and a dance, so to phrase it, in the September of 1790, and the place of all places he sought to represent was Oxford.

That home of lost causes upheld its reputation

in his case ; at least it would have done so, if we are to judge by the fate of the gentleman who actually stood for it in his place ; for Barrymore, although his name was put forward as a candidate, seems to have realised the hopelessness of his success, and yielding to advice (probably the only time he took any) he withdrew from a contest in which it was clearly shown he would not have had a dog's chance.

But he was not deterred by one rebuff. Perhaps he realised that Oxford was after all hardly a suitable constituency for him to represent ; and he then bethought him of another where his local influence might well be regarded as giving him a better claim on the independent suffrages (knowing what we do of the ways of eighteenth century elections, the phrase possesses elements of the comic spirit) of the electors ; and Reading was obviously indicated. It is characteristic of Barrymore's methods, perhaps to some extent of the times, that his one idea of ingratiating himself with the voters should have taken the form of culinary bribery, and the great banquet he gave to all and sundry on September 30th at Reading was long remembered in the town, and chiefly, it would seem, on account of a monstrous turtle which weighed, we are told, no less than 150 lbs., which had been expressly sent at his orders from London and whose flavour it was doubtless hoped by the sanguine young man would be still lingering

on the palates of the free and independent electors on polling day.

Having done so much, Barrymore seems to have thought he had done enough. We do not hear that he took the trouble personally to canvass the constituency, a course which, considering his free and easy manners and a taking personality, might have been crowned with success. Indeed he probably forgot all about the matter until a General Election in the following June suddenly reminded him that he had not even arranged for his nomination, which was not indeed actually made till two or three days before the polling. There were three candidates, two being old members, Messrs. Annesley and Neville, and it must have been almost a foregone conclusion that Lord Barrymore was at the bottom of the poll. At this he was not particularly disturbed, and with another mighty feast to his supporters he indicated his gratitude for past efforts and not improbably hoped to lay the foundation for future and more successful benefits.

It is a matter of some speculation as to what effect victory would have had on the young man. One cannot visualise him as a serious member of Parliament; all, indeed, one might have anticipated, would have been an intermittent attendance, one or two flashy speeches, if he ever took the trouble to speak at all, a constant irritation on the part of the whips, and at the next Election a reversal of Reading's too credulous confidence. For

Barrymore never gave evidence of really becoming a serious member of society, far less a serious politician ; and one feels he would have entered on an alien career as a change from pursuits which had begun to lose much of their novelty, and as quickly have renounced it on the appearance of some still more novel and more congenial source of *divertissement*.

Much has been said, by too friendly writers, of his inherent charm and good manners. All the anecdotes, and they are numerous enough, which have been preserved of his social accomplishment, show him to have possessed neither. At a dance, or a dinner, before he had drunk too much, he could behave himself and might even, I suppose, have been termed good company, although the conception of what was good behaviour in those times was very different from what we should to-day consider it ; but in less restrained surroundings he was a noisy, roystering fellow enough, supremely indifferent to the feelings of others, and sometimes ill-mannered beyond the verge of vulgarity. At the 'Humbug' Club especially, surrounded as he so invariably was by a number of toadies and flatterers, he exhibited these objectionable traits in a marked degree, and stories are told of how he would interrupt the singing of Charles Incledon, and take part in the baiting of total strangers, in that sort of mystification which he hoped to be able to turn subsequently into a laugh but which

not infrequently degenerated into indecorous horse-play and furious quarrel.

Nothing delighted him, apparently, more than such scenes, and it was in these and among those in less reputable haunts, the night cellars, the brothels, the thieves' dens, and such-like places where young men of birth imagined they were seeing life when they were but becoming acquainted with the low and seamy side of urban existence, that he gained the sobriquet of 'Hellgate' which seems so inapplicable to him as we read the rose-coloured narrative of his career handed down to us by Anthony Pasquin. For truth to tell, if one relied only on that source of information we might well wonder how it was that a young man, who merely loved the Turf and had a passion for theatricals, who delighted in the rustic simplicity of Wargrave, and in introducing into its rural charms nothing more incongruous than polite society and semi-regal entertainments, came to earn so unfortunate a label.

The fact is Pasquin had received many benefits from one who, in spite of all his faults, was generous enough, if regardless lavishness can be termed generosity; and unlike many such hangers-on he was grateful. It is a too pleasant and too infrequent attribute for us to find fault with; but it led him into overstating his case for the defence, and under his over-partial pen Barrymore emerges as an *homme incompris*; as the victim of the

paragraphist and the sport of the licentiously-minded, who were ever ready to attribute to him deeds and sayings which were merely evolved from their own profligate imaginations.

There may have been a modicum of truth in this. No man is all bad ; even the most determined evil-liver has some moments when he forgets the arts of seduction, the pleasures of the dice-box, or the fumes of the bottle. But when a man has given evidence of a marked predilection for some or all of these, it not unnaturally results that he becomes, as it were, hall-marked ; and it may be taken as an axiom that no one gains an epithet without having in some way earned it ; although certain aspects of his character may seem to make it inappropriate and the result of an over-harsh and hasty generalisation.

It is a curious fact, however, that, although by no means immaculate in such a connection, Lord Barrymore does not come down to us in his relations with women as an outstanding rake ; and there is little doubt that had he been we should have come across the fact not only among the *arcana* of 18th century records but emblazoned boldly in its more recognised chronicles. Old Q thought of nothing more, Barrymore seems to have thought of nothing less ; and he was either more circumspect or less cynical in his pursuit of such pleasures, if he really pursued them, than his general character seems to indicate. That love of

dressing up discloses a certain effeminacy of constitution which may possibly account for the fact that, as in the case of Brummell, there is no lady of easy ethics whose name has become specially attached to his ; and Old Q, with his Tondinos and Renas and Fagnianis and a thousand others, seems as far removed, in sexual rakishness, from the stage-stuck Lord of Wargrave, as that young fool of quality was, say, from gloomy Mr. Day or the respectable Mr. Wilberforce.

If racing and acting were the chief business of Barrymore's life, practical joking (and with him in this his two brothers) may be said to have been the recreation. Innumerable stories are told of their audacities in such directions, but for the most part they are so pointless and puerile as to be justified in the re-telling only as a form of padding—in itself no justification. Silly jokes with pretended dead bodies we have seen them playing at Brighton; a still stupider one, with a real corpse, which might have had fatal consequences, is connected with Wargrave on an occasion when the man called ' Joe the Conjurer ' and his wife visited the place and were frightened out of their wits not only at finding a lifeless form in their bedroom, but still more at being subsequently suspected of murder.

The follies of three young men whose combined ages amounted to but sixty years would not under ordinary circumstances create much serious attention ; but when they happen to be of an old and

illustrious family, with one of them wearing an earl's coronet and enjoying an income of twenty thousand a year, their freaks not unnaturally become items of news and sources of scandal, and society was kept perpetually agog by the details of some fresh pranks in which the Barry family was continually indulging.

Barrymore himself still continued, at the same time, his racing and his theatrical performances with unabated vigour ; and it may truly be said that what he won on the swings he lost on the roundabouts ; for there is no doubt that at times he made a vast deal of money on the Turf, and would have made more had he not been the prey of unscrupulous people who, knowing his love for a wager of any kind, too often induced him to embark on matches which his calmer judgment (for in such matters he had remarkable judgment) would have rejected. But no number of successes could keep pace with the immense sums he was lavishing week by week on his play-houses (which are often said to have cost £1500 a night) and those splendid entertainments he was continually giving both at Wargrave and in London, the expenses of which must have been stupendous. Like Gallio, however, he cared for none of these things : so long as he could enjoy himself and afford enjoyment to his friends, he regarded money with a royal disdain. Fencing with Angelo in his Piccadilly rooms ; riding his own horses at Newmarket and Lewes ;

driving a team round the Steyne at Brighton ; gambling and drinking ; dancing and play-acting ; at a picnic on the river or in a thieves' kitchen in the metropolis ; all was one to him, always provided he could diversify his amusements before they became boring, and could raise a laugh from a roomful of boon companions, or a smile and a friendly word from the effulgent Prince into whose attractive orbit he had fluttered.

We have already seen that his attempt to represent Reading in Parliament was a dismal failure. But in spite of this defeat he seems still to have had a curious hankering after a seat in the House of Commons. In those days if a well-known man, and a rich one especially, set his mind on such an object, there were plenty of ways by which his ambition could be gratified ; ' pocket boroughs ' were not infrequently in the market (for it practically came to that), and if a sufficiently high price could be obtained, their owners were able to make it all right with the free and independent electors. It so happened that about this time that of Heytesbury was available, and although Barrymore would far sooner have had a constituency nearer his own country place, Reading for choice, he accepted the more distant seat as an alternative.

It may seem curious why a man whose sole aim and end of life was a succession of variegated pleasures should have been so anxious to engage in something which could hardly be likely in his case

to be productive of amusement. But there was a good and sufficient reason. In those days members of Parliament were free from arrest for debt. Now this was a matter of importance to the young Earl ; for since many months his monetary affairs had been in a parlous state ; and although he managed to go on meeting vast expenses, partly through his large income and partly by frequent recourse to money-lenders, he was living far beyond his means, and was metaphorically dancing on a volcano which at any moment might, in the shape of a sheriff's warrant, blow him sky-high. He had already had experience of such matters ; for soon after he had taken up his residence in his new Piccadilly abode, and was, indeed, leaving the house to attend one of the Prince of Wales' dances, he was arrested by two officers, on account of the non-payment of a tailor's bill for £750. As a matter of fact he was able to discharge the amount there and then ; but it must have been a lesson to him, if not to curtail his expenses, which he certainly took no steps to do, at least to arrange for a non-recurrence of the circumstance : and hence, no doubt, his anxiety to obtain a seat in the House of Commons.

In the meanwhile his career continued to be marked by the most wasteful and ridiculous excesses ; and his expenditure became vaster day by day. An example of the futility of some of his outgoings occurred about this time. He appears

to have had a quarrel with the Prince of Wales, and anxious to make it up, he thought of the Ascot Races as affording a good opportunity. He therefore ordered an elaborate and costly luncheon to be prepared on one of the race days, in a tent on the course, and invited His Royal Highness to partake of it. The Prince did not come, and the Earl and a single friend alone sat down to a lunch which had cost over eight hundred pounds. Not at all deterred by this snub, Barrymore sent an invitation to his quondam royal friend to a second lunch, as costly as the first ; again he met with a refusal, and only Lord Falkland and Anthony Pasquin helped him to consume a meal worthy of Lucullus.

Although Barrymore, with all his *insouciance* in regard to such matters, must have known that his financial affairs were rapidly approaching a crisis, he seems to have taken few if any steps to avert or minimise the disaster, and the Wargrave theatre was kept as busy ; his horses run as often ; his personal expenses were as large as they had been when he first came into his inheritance and imagined there was no limit to his resources. If he wanted a new carriage, and just then he *did* want a *vis-à-vis*, built on novel and most expensive lines, he ordered it ; if he lacked an actor or actress to take a part in his theatricals, he sent to London with offers of the most extravagant fees, and *carte blanche* with regard to dresses, and down

came Mrs. Goodall or Miss Richards, or one of the male performers from Drury Lane or Covent Garden, seduced away from those historic boards for the nonce by irresistible monetary temptation.

The first indication of the approaching crash took the form of certain rumours which spread through Wargrave that all was not well; and the local tradespeople, who had hitherto been ready to give indefinite credit to one whose resources seemed limitless, now began with one accord to press for the payment of their accounts. For a time Barrymore was able to weather the storm, although a trick he played on some of his county creditors might well have made them think the crisis had actually arrived. For he is said to have assembled them in his theatre, and having received details of his various debts to them, he asked if they would allow him to leave them for a moment, adding that his man of business would join them and settle the bills. He then withdrew, and jumping into a carriage drove away with a friend to Henley, leaving the too credulous shop people waiting indefinitely for the appearance of his representative and their money.

In the meantime the volatile young man does not appear in any way to have altered his course of life or to have taken any steps to reduce his vast expenditure. He went to Brighton as usual, and there incidentally had a row with a butcher who was setting two dogs on each other, and gave

him a sound hiding ; he got his brother Augustus over from France from the military college where he was studying, an episode which resulted in the younger man, who was as bad as his elder, being involved in a quarrel on the Steyne with a Frenchman, which but for the interference of the Prince of Wales might have had unfortunate consequences ; he exhibited his capabilities as a Jehu before an astonished company at the same fashionable resort ; and, his quarrel with the Prince having been composed, was as constant a guest, to the disgust of Lord Thurlow, at the Pavilion, as ever ; he actually further increased his racing establishment, although he must have known well enough that it could not be long before he would be obliged to give it up altogether.

A man who had steadily built up such a reputation as that which now clung like a garment to Barrymore may well have been regarded as fair game for the lampoonists and caricaturists. It was the heyday of such forms of personality, and there were few men about town who escaped the attentions of these artistic and literary censors, whose forms of reprobation not infrequently made what they reprehended worse by the vulgarity and indecency with which they spiced their strictures.

As an example of this form of notoriety, the print which Gillray produced entitled ' Les Trois Magots ' may be taken as typical of many such productions. In it the three Barry brothers are

portrayed, and the severity of the satire may be deduced from the fact that Barrymore is described in it as 'A Hellgate Blackguard,' Augustus Barry as 'A Newgate Scrub,' and Henry Barry as 'A Cripplegate Monster'; while the lines beneath run as follows:

" To whip a top, to knuckle down at taw,
 To swing upon a gate, to ride a straw,
 To play at push-pin with dull brother peers,
 To belch out catches in a porter's ears,
 To reign the monarch of a midnight cell,
 To be the gaping chairman's oracle,
 Whilst, in most blessèd union, rogue and whore,
 Clap hands, huzza, and hiccup out Encore;
 With midnight howl, to bay th' affrighted moon,
 To walk with torches thro' the streets at noon,
 To force plain Nature from her usual way,
 Each night a vigil, and a blank each day;
 To match for speed one feather 'gainst another,
 To make one leg run races with his brother,
 To coin new-fangled wagers, and to lay 'em,
 Laying to lose, and losing not to pay 'em,
 The Magots, on that stock which Nature gives,
 Without a rival stand.¹

There is no doubt that Barrymore and his brothers outdid each other in the number and character of their escapades; and Brighton was the scene of much of their foolery. They were a pugnacious set, and nothing seems to have pleased

¹ In the *Attic Miscellany* for (circa) 1789 is a print entitled *The Levée, or the Mæcenas of Scrubs and Scaramouches*, depicting Barrymore surrounded by pugilists, jockeys, cock-fighters, and others of this kind with whom he consorted.



' LES TROIS MAGOTS '
(BY GILLRAY).

them more than an opportunity for entering into a quarrel. Many are the stories told of how they were only too successful in this respect, a success not infrequently added to by the help of the boxer Hooper, who appears to have acted as a sort of bodyguard to the brothers generally, and often to have scientifically completed what they had begun. A case in point, from many, was that of the attack made at Brighton by the Earl on a certain Mr. Donadieu, a hairdresser of Charles Street, Soho, who had inadvertently driven his chaise against that of Barrymore, and who, seeking satisfaction from the latter for having lashed his horse, was first set on by the master with a hunting crop, and then by the pugilistic servant, with bare fists. This affair did not, however, end here; for Donadieu sought the protection of the Law Courts, and Lord Barrymore had to pay £50 for this exhibition of his hasty temper, besides receiving a well-deserved rebuke from Lord Kenyon, the presiding judge.

How the brothers Augustus and Henry were turned out of the house of the Duchess de la Pienna at Brighton, into which they entered uninvited on the occasion of a supper given to the Prince of Wales by the Duchess; how Lord Barrymore on one occasion serenaded Mrs. Fitzherbert, with Angelo in attendance, to the disgust of Prince Florizel; and an hundred other escapades here, less possible of repetition, were matters which were

talked about at the time but really seem too ephemeral to need insisting on.

The fact is, however, that Barrymore's career was largely a repetition of such pranks. Given these, and his racing and acting, his driving and his card-playing, there is little else in the record of an essentially selfish life of pleasure which is capable of being set down. When he was not at Newmarket or Epsom or Ascot he was either painting the town red in London, or disporting himself on his stage at Wargrave, with intervals, there, of scandalising the villagers by a thousand silly freaks ; or we catch him rushing about the country in mad and headlong driving exploits, or winning and losing (generally the latter) large sums at his favourite game of Quinze.

It is characteristic of his *insouciance* regarding the rapidly approaching crisis in his financial affairs that in 1792, having already two theatres on his hands, he entered into negotiations for a third—that at Brighton. There is something rather mysterious about this—and I am inclined to think there was a good deal more in the matter than appeared—indeed that the suggestion of taking the seaside play-house was merely a pretext for revenge. It happened that young Fox, the son of the lessee, was supposed to have been the author of one of the printed attacks on Barrymore, and in the July of 1790 had been assaulted for this reason at Brighton by the Earl and his brothers,

when the former behaved so badly that the Prince of Wales, who happened to come up during the encounter, is said to have exclaimed "D—— me, Barrymore, behave like a man," and incidentally to have received a blow which disfigured him considerably. Now when nearly two years later (to be precise in January 1792) this same Fox went to Wargrave to negotiate with the Earl regarding the Brighton theatre, he was subjected to an assault in the green room of the Earl's play-house there, and was actually left insensible till found the next morning by the custodian of the place. Knowing something of Barrymore's character one can hardly doubt that he had inveigled the young man down under false pretences, in order to be quits with him. It is an unsavoury story—but so many of Barrymore's actions were unsavoury that there seems a *prima facie* case for suspecting him in this instance.

It was again the Wargrave Theatre that figured in a dispute between Barrymore and its builder, a certain Mr. Cox. The latter put in a claim for £450—the balance of his account, and as the Earl refused to pay it, the matter was taken to the Law Courts, where Lord Kenyon (who had before rebuked Barrymore, as we have seen) was again the judge and administered another homily to the defendant, which the latter probably regarded far less than he did the verdict of the jury, which forced him to pay the sum in dispute as well as the costs of the action.

The publicity given to this circumstance, combined with the growing suspicion as to Barrymore's monetary stability (the want of stability in his *character* had never been doubted by anyone), hurried on the crisis in his affairs, and in the spring of 1792, in spite of some successes on the Turf, he found it necessary to obtain ready money and to cut down some at least of his many expenses. The first thing he did was to sell his Piccadilly mansion and its stabling, which, as I have already mentioned, were purchased by Old Q, and to dispose of all the costly contents. By this means he was able, for a time, to continue his other expenses. But the closing of his stables quickly followed, although he was still heavily backing other people's horses, winning 1000 guineas at Epsom by betting on one of Lord Grosvenor's; and pocketing a similar sum, in a very different direction, notably at a cricket match at Lord's, where he arranged a match between the Prince of Wales' Club at Brighton and the M.C.C.; when his eleven won.

There were by this time (1792) not many things the Earl of Barrymore had not done—but marriage was not among them; and now, on the very brink of impending ruin, he seems to have thought of this as a hitherto untried experience. Curiously enough the young lady he selected, a Miss Goulding, was neither well-born nor wealthy, she was in fact a niece of Lady Lade (famous for her strong language) and her father is said to have been a sedan-

chair man. Sir John and Lady Lade, who appear to have been the guardians of the girl, were only too ready for their niece to become a countess, even when the man who was to make her one was such an out and out scapegrace as Barrymore. But the Earl could never do anything like anyone else ; and therefore, although there was no reason for the step, he must, forsooth, make elaborate preparations to run away with the young lady to Gretna Green. The sequel is rather mysterious. The pair certainly set off ; but it seems improbable that they ever reached their destination. There was, in fact, no little scandal bandied about with regard to the affair ; but it is not denied that a legal marriage did eventually take place between the Earl and Miss Goulding ; and the Gretna Green episode may be placed among Barrymore's other escapades, and as pointless as most of them.

One good thing did result from the Earl's selection of Miss Goulding as a wife, or rather it might have done, had he married her earlier : for she appears to have been a sensible girl and possessed of a frugal mind, and had she had time might conceivably have brought some kind of order into her husband's affairs. But she came on the scene too late to be able to do much ; although she did what she could. For hardly had the wedding taken place than judgments were obtained by various creditors against the Earl, and 'executions' followed with alarming promptitude. The

Wargrave theatre was dismantled, and the property, scenery, and expensive dresses were sold by auction ; for the building itself no bid was forthcoming, and there was nothing for it but to pull it down and dispose of the materials. What the interior of this play-house looked like can be seen from the picture reproduced at p. 162 ; and it can easily be imagined what an effective setting it was to the distinguished company, not infrequently including the Prince of Wales himself, which was constantly gathered together here. One may laugh at the stage-struck protagonist ; one may wonder at his wasteful and often ridiculous excess, but there is no doubt that the place afforded innocent amusement to numbers of the surrounding families, whose chances of seeing good plays well acted were then few and far between. Not only must Barrymore have been himself a very creditable performer, but he took care to enlist as supporters much of the foremost theatrical talent of the time ; and of all his forms of spending money it is probable that none gave so much pleasure to so many people, besides affording employment to many others, as the Wargrave Theatre.

Besides this special feature, the fact of Barrymore's residing in the little place must have been a source of much emolument to many who gained a livelihood there. The inns were constantly crowded with visitors ; even the cottages were not infrequently patronised by those who could obtain

shelter in no other places ; and with this and the work incident on such an establishment there could have been little unemployment in the days when the erratic but prodigal Earl was dispensing, as he was continually, an almost royal hospitality, and when he and his friends imparted to the Thames-side village that air of bustle and activity which is, after all, an antidote to the general somnolence of such remote centres. Mr. Elwes in another part of Berkshire, unattended by scandal if not by gossip, was a less acceptable and less advantageous inhabitant than the open-handed young Earl around whose sayings and doings scandal and gossip loved to congregate. No doubt the counsel of perfection is in the middle course, the *juste milieu* between wasteful prodigality and the miserliness which counts its candles and gloats over its hidden gold ; but of the two, one knows which is the more attractive, and the political economist will tell us which is the more generally useful.

The fact is that such a man as Barrymore stands in the light of a terrestrial Providence to numbers who in consequence of his prodigalities find a source of employment. Thus far his doings may be regarded as capable of some excuse. At the same time, even if in their results they seem thus to be in some senses justified, one cannot but acknowledge that their cause is unable to profit by such a justification ; for this cause is generally, as it was

in his case, selfishness, self-indulgence and a total disregard of justness. It is for this reason that one's judgment of a character like that of Lord Barrymore's continually oscillates between unmitigated reprobation and half-hearted excuse. When it occasionally 'deviates into sense' one feels inclined to give it that praise which we should withhold from one whose character was habitually sensible; when it, as it more often does, exhibits extravagance we fall back on the defence that at least such prodigality does good to many; but when we are confronted by the evidence of cruelty exercised against the helpless, or practical jokes to which the unoffending have to submit, of good gifts prostituted, and valuable time wasted in a thousand trifling ways, we come to realise its worthlessness and its criminality—and it is for this reason that your rake, with all his taking qualities and all his charm of manner, can never really abide any impartial judgment; and if his career can point a moral it cannot properly be said to adorn any tale.



CHAPTER V

THE EARL OF BARRYMORE (*Concluded*)

ALTHOUGH the enforced curtailment of his racing establishment and the entire giving up of his theatres deprived Lord Barrymore of his two favourite amusements; while the hospitality he so delighted to lavish on all and sundry was necessarily largely diminished, he yet found various means of recreation, and one of the chief of these, during the summer and autumn of 1792, was cricket. He had always been an ardent supporter of the game, and was himself quite a good performer: indeed so enthusiastic was he (but then he was that in whatever he indulged) that on one occasion he is said to have played for many hours in the rain, only giving in when his clothes and those of his friends were so heavy with wet that their wearers could hardly run. What the pitch was like baffles imagination! It is curious considering this cricket enthusiasm that Barrymore does not appear to have been a member of the M.C.C., and he cannot compare with men like the Duke of Dorset or the Earl of Winchelsea as a

pioneer of the game. But that he was keen is shown by the zest with which he played when at Brighton ; and there is a record of a match he organised at Wargrave between the gentlemen of that village and those of Twyford, which took place on October 11th, 1792. It was played for a stake of 100 guineas, the result of which is not known. This match occurred just four days before the actual sale of the Wargrave Theatre and properties, which Mr. Christie conducted on the spot, although Mr. Roberts, in his *Memorials of Christie's*, makes no mention of the fact. It is characteristic of Barrymore's temperament that the *débâcle* of this theatre does not in any way appear to have interfered with his enjoyment of his cricket match !

I imagine that the dispersal of the racing stud did not take place till after the Spring Meetings of this year ; for at Newmarket from April 14th to May 13th the Barrymore horses took part in various events, and scored quite a number of successes. But this was the end of their owner's Turf career, and when the animals were put up to auction, Chanticleer, which had beaten Lord Grosvenor's Asparagus in a match for 500 guineas on the last mentioned date, was knocked down to the Duke of York for 2700 guineas.¹

With the closing of the two establishments, theatrical and equine, which had given employ-

¹ When shortly after the Duke sold his stud, this very horse fetched only 500 guineas.

ment to such a variety of people, Barrymore's influence and credit suffered a still severer blow. I imagine he kept a few carriages and riding horses, but his stable at Wargrave must have been put on a very humble footing in comparison with what it had been, and of all his theatrical hangers-on, Anthony Pasquin was alone retained ; the *couleur de rose* picture which the latter draws of his patron in his *Life* of him may be regarded as an evidence of gratitude for this and former favours.

We now find Barrymore, who was one of those restless souls who must be always doing something, taking part in debates at the ' Free Debate Club ' at Reading, on the question ' Whether a continuance of the Slave Trade was consistent with the principle of a Free Nation's sound policy or the dictates of Humanity.' Although he had come unprepared, he is said to have addressed the meeting with grace and energy, and there is no reason to doubt this, for he had always been a ready speaker,¹ and in such an environment a very little might well have passed for finished oratory.

A less serious *milieu* in which he occasionally found himself at this time was a certain so-called ' Bacchanalian Society,' which he had founded at the neighbouring town of Wokingham, whose meetings were held once a month at the Rose Tavern. On one of these occasions he added to

¹ It is not, however, recorded that he ever addressed the House of Commons.

the gaiety of the proceedings by giving an expensive dinner to all the members of the club, and also by re-inforcing them by the importation of a number of boon companions brought down from London, regardless of cost, in special post-chaises. This was at a time when he had been obliged to sell right and left in order to satisfy his creditors—who, I may add, were still unsatisfied ; and when he could not know but that at any moment he might be at least dunned, if he could not be actually arrested, for some fresh debt.

But the end of his reckless life was close at hand. We have seen that during the previous year he had obtained a commission in the Berkshire Regiment. Early in the year 1793 this regiment was ordered to Rye, and it so happened that a detachment of French prisoners had to be escorted from that town to Dover, on March 6th. Barrymore, who was always anxious to be on the move, asked his Colonel if the duty of handing over the Frenchmen to the authorities at Dover might be undertaken by him ; and this being accorded, he set out at the head of a company numbering twenty, with the captives, of whom there were sixteen ; his open gig driven by his valet following. The party reached Folkestone without mishap, and the Earl and his men halted for refreshments. While they were eating and drinking, two friends of Barrymore's—Admiral M'Bride and General Smith—happened to pass, and after some conversation they

left, having arranged to dine with the Earl that evening.

All being now ready to continue the journey, Barrymore settled the bill, drank a glass of brandy with the landlady, whom he is said to have embraced in a jocular way at parting, and jumped into the gig. It appears that among other things in the vehicle was a loaded gun which the servant had placed between himself and his master. The presence of this gun is explained by the fact that Barrymore thought he might, perhaps, get a shot at some wild-fowl on his way, and wished to have it ready to his hand should any appear. As they proceeded, the jolting of the gig caused the fire-arm suddenly to slip down, and as it fell the trigger is said to have caught the edge of the seat. The gun went off, and the charge entered Barrymore's brain through his left eye. The gig was immediately turned round and driven furiously back to the inn which had only been left a few minutes before. The unfortunate victim was carried into one of the rooms, and a surgeon was sent for post-haste ; but nothing he could do was of the least avail, and Lord Barrymore expired just forty minutes after the discharge of the gun.

Two days later an inquest was held, and on the evidence of the valet a verdict of accidental death was returned. The body was then conveyed to Wargrave, not without various precautions in order to prevent its being seized (as was then the

stupid and barbarous custom) by his creditors. The transference was, however, safely accomplished, and on the following March 17th the remains of Lord Barrymore were buried in the chancel of Wargrave Church, not far from the spot where the body of Thomas Day, who wrote *Sandford and Merton*, and who, one feels sure, would have been delighted to draw a moral from the Earl's life and death, had been laid four years previously. No stone marked his grave, nor, when the church was burned down some years ago and the *débris* removed, was anything discovered to show exactly where it was situated. Indeed there is nothing in the village remaining to perpetuate the memory of the man who once bulked so largely in its life and amusements except the reconstructed house where he lived and which now bears his name.¹ His splendid theatre, his stables, even his tomb, are but indicated by local tradition; but his name will always be identified with the spot where he lived so resplendently for a few years of feverish existence. If he gave cause for gossip and malevolent rumours during his lifetime, his death was equally attended by all kinds of imaginary reports; but there is no doubt that it occurred through a pure accident; and it is, at least, satisfactory to know that if his career was

¹ In our own day it was the residence of that mighty hunter, Captain F. C. Selous, D.S.O.; and is now occupied by Major Griffin.

the reverse of wise or prudent, at least he met his end, not in riot or disorder but in fulfilling a military duty.

As we have seen, he had married Miss Goulding, and a question arose as to whether there was any prospect of a posthumous heir. The matter was of importance, and necessitated a formal statement by the Countess that she was not an expectant mother. This being so, the title devolved on Henry Barry, who thus succeeded as 8th Earl of Barrymore and whom, by the way, we shall meet again in the following volume.

In spite of the enormous sums of money (especially large for those days) which Lord Barrymore had spent on his theatres, his racing establishment, his horses and servants, and in other ways too numerous to specify and which is said to have amounted to no less than £300,000, so considerable was his estate that after everything was cleared up it was found that he actually died solvent. This had been largely brought about by retrenchment, and by the careful management of Mr. Hammersley, the banker of Pall Mall,¹ into whose hands Barrymore had latterly placed his estates, and who allowed him £2,500 a year. Pasquin goes so far as to say, "I will venture to assert with confidence, and I challenge any to disprove the assertion, that very few men have ever quitted the

¹ He also looked after the monetary affairs of the Prince of Wales.

world so little in debt as Lord Barrymore, whose expenses were so unlimited ; ” and he adds (he was writing shortly after his patron’s death), “ It may be some consolation to the unsatisfied claimants of the late Earl of Barrymore to know that there is sufficient personal property to answer the few demands that can be made.” “ As this statement is fair and undeniable,” he proceeds, “ how villainous, how contemptible, how satanic is it to load the character of this unfortunate, this excellent young nobleman, with opprobrium, and that opprobrium erected on a false basis.”

This is carrying the *nil nisi bonum* precept to very great lengths ; and there will be those who, having followed the foregoing account of the career of the 7th Earl of Barrymore, will be inclined to consider that his apologist doth protest too much, and in his desire to whitewash his hero has overstated his case. But there is this to be said : Pasquin had nothing now to gain by his advocacy ; indeed, considering his intimacy with Barrymore he might well have regarded himself as an aggrieved person in not being left anything, nor even in being appointed an executor ; and in his too highly-coloured picture of his late patron one can at least trace one excellent characteristic, too often wanting in dependants, that of gratitude for benefits not forgot.

Lord Barrymore died, as we have seen, in March 1793, and on the following April 4th a portion of

the contents of his Wargrave house was sold by auction, but it was his successor who disposed of some of the Irish estates, Castle Lyons, near Fermoy, and Buttevant, for instance. Those estates had but half a century earlier comprised no fewer than thirty parishes, and extended over nearly 140,000 acres !

Just a year and a half after Lord Barrymore's tragic death, his widow married, at Richmond, Surrey, Captain Williams, of the Guards ; the wedding taking place on September 22nd, 1794.

With this event, we should appropriately take leave of Richard, 7th Earl of Barrymore, but that something seems to be required to be added, as a summary of his curious and complex character. We have already seen, in this series of studies on the personalities of the rakes, a remarkable variation in the way they exhibited those tendencies by which they have gained their title to be included in this roll. Some have been all for women ; some all for wine ; some have been great spend-thrifts ; some have been inveterate gamblers ; a few have combined these characteristics. But one thing has been predominant in nearly every one of them : intellectual ability. I do not mean intellectual ability as exhibited in knowledge gained from deep reading, although many of them were far above the average in this respect, but a sort of native talent, a mental acuteness, which enabled them to distinguish themselves in other ways than

the ways of the mere rake. Charles II. was a man of extraordinary ability, as not even his enemies have attempted to deny ; Buckingham as a playwright, and Rochester as a poet, have left distinguished names in our literature ; even Brouncker was a consummate chess-player, and the names of Etheredge and Sedley and Wycherley are chiefly remembered as those of poets and dramatists ; no doubt the detestable Charteris would have made his mark as a man of business (as, indeed, so far as accumulating money goes, he did) had not another more dominant ruling passion obscured his activities in the buying and selling of stocks and the swindling of the unwary ; all the members of the Hell Fire Club were men of marked ability in various ways ; and Old Q, who hated books, at least possessed the knowledge and acumen of an outstanding book-maker.

Among these, Barrymore, with all his follies on his head, takes a not undistinguished place. Unlike them he died young (he was but in his twenty-fourth year), but in a short space of time—a period of little more than five years—he showed that, in one direction, he had become as knowing in the *arcana* of the Turf as the Duke of Queensberry himself ; and in another, that his powers as an actor were fully equal to all but the outstanding stars of the stage during a brilliant period of dramatic art. In other respects, too, he was specially notable, at a time when proficiency in

such things was regarded as almost a necessary equipment of a man of fashion ; for he was an excellent gentleman-jockey and a consummate whip ; and if as a rider to hounds he was erratic—for even Pasquin says “ he was a bold rider, but not a uniformly bold hunter ; he has sometimes retreated from leaps, which his associates have made. I have seen him plunge with his horse into the Thames, and swim to the other side ; and a few days after hesitate to fly over a small hedge ”—he would on occasion do the most daring and fool-hardy things.

Had he been content to run and back his own horses ; to have sought Thespian fame in other people’s theatres ; to have extended a discreet hospitality to his many friends, he might well have come down to us as a munificent Mæcenas who was as witty as his wittiest guest, and as finished an actor as many a professional. But unfortunately for his fame and his pocket he was bitten by that *folie des grandeurs* which has been the undoing of many a man of fortune who seems to have been acute and even far-seeing with regard to everything but his own monetary affairs. The knowledge and ability which Barrymore displayed in anything to do with racing, and the very large sums he was continually winning on the Turf, might well have enabled him to balance even the immense expenses of his racing establishment, and perhaps even to have made a profit. But con-

currently with his outgoings and incomings in this respect there went hand in hand a prodigality of expenditure in other ways which was at times almost fantastic. He could do nothing, build a theatre, organise a ball, give a dinner, arrange a pic-nic, without doing one and all on a scale of magnificence with which even his large resources were unable to cope. Like the Duke of Buckingham of early Victorian days, he suffered from that type of megalomania which seems so futile and which sooner or later leads to financial disaster.

Like all men who can be ostentatiously generous, he could be on occasion the reverse of liberal, especially where no self-indulgence was to be obtained or open-mouthed praises secured. He was often over sarcastic in his conversation, and above all things he loved to play practical jokes on all and sundry, a habit that not infrequently involved him in quarrels, except in the case of those who suffered such things gladly because of their dependence on him, or for some ulterior reason.

Many people found him insufferable ; but there were those who, knowing him, realised that much that he said and did was done and said for the sake of a transient effect. Indeed, few men have been judged more variously. To some he was the Hellgate of the phrase which has clung like a burr to his memory, a blackguard and a scamp ; others, and they were, it must be remembered, those who

knew him intimately, are far less severe ; and these were able to find in his character, beneath the crust of rakishness which he affected, qualities not unpleasing, in some instances even attractive.

He loved to see the bottle circulating at his table, but, if we are to believe Pasquin, he was not himself a deep drinker ; he was accused of licentiousness, but could demean himself decently enough to women who were decent, and “ no man ever behaved with more circumspection, and more apparent dread of offending towards a virtuous woman.” That he was not quite the paragon his friend tries to make him is certain enough. No one earns a *sobriquet* such as his without some reason for it. But like the proverbial dog with a bad name, rumour has chosen to hang him, and to hang him so high and conspicuously that all the world has taken it for granted that he deserved his fate.

He was no student, but he had read a certain amount of good literature, even if he had not profited by the teaching of the philosophers. Mr. Robinson tells us that he had perused and studied the works of Machiavelli, Locke, Montesquieu, and Sydney Smith. He may have done ; although what Sydney Smith, who was little over twenty years of age at the date of Barrymore’s death, had written at that time I do not know ! With regard to his reading, Pasquin rather ingenuously remarks that, “ he seemed naturally inclined to the perusal

of romances, and I believe he read the *Arabian Nights Entertainments* and *Les Contes de Boccace* oftener than any other publication." He might have done worse ; and one can visualise him giving a good deal more attention to the latter than to the philosophical reflections of the studious Mr. Locke or those of the learned legal Baron—unless, to be sure, it was *Les Lettres Persanes* which engaged his attention, and not *L'Esprit des Lois*.

In estimating the character of notorious people of the past, a consideration of the times they lived in is as necessary as an investigation of their particular temperaments. What would be considered impossible in these days, was often, in the light of other manners and customs, neither extraordinary nor necessarily specially culpable. Lord Barrymore should thus be judged not as he would appear, say, at the Court of George V. (if he were ever permitted within its respectable precincts) but as he appeared in the environment of George, Prince of Wales. That effulgent royal personage had really much to answer for, and when we find it stated by a contemporary that, "the magnificent blandishments, graces and fascination which have marked the splendid career of the Prince of Wales, have made him the innocent cause of much distress to many," and that "Lord Barrymore was not wholly uninfected by this imitative *mania*," we get, I think, a hint at much in that nobleman's career which was reprehensible and which led to

ultimate disaster. Not a few of those lesser luminaries which revolved round the royal planet tried their best to shine with as dazzling a light as he ; or, to drop from such an ethereal metaphor, one may liken them to a collocation of frogs sitting with attentive eyes round that bull-calf, and swelling and swelling, until the inevitable Aesopian catastrophe happened. Barrymore, to carry on the trope, was young and ardent, and emulative, and he really made a very good show of his inflating powers—but, of course, it would not do ; and miserably he lies—an effete, burst wind-bag (once, too, so promising a frog) in the eyes of social history, the only history in which he attempted to exhibit his powers and in which his airs and graces have rather a theatrical, tinsel, effect.

I don't think he was essentially bad—a young man may act as a blackguard on occasion with many excellent qualities stultified for the nonce—indeed under different auspices, and given time for him to have seen the folly of his ways, he might quite conceivably have become a decent and useful member of society. But he had so much against him : his period, his wealth, his lack of proper upbringing, his youth. And so he comes down to us with the trappings of a stage-monarch and with some of the appurtenances of a factitious royalty. One sees him in, as it were, a perpetual hurry of existence, flying from one means of pleasure to another ; devouring with activity his essentially

empty hours ; producing nothing but elaborate feasts or gala entertainments, backing and riding races at Newmarket and Epsom ; hunting imported stags and bought foxes around Wargrave ; organising nothing more important than pic-nics, associating with nobody more serious than play-actors and jockeys, tuft-hunters, and young men of quality as idle as, and generally more brainless than, himself.

There is a foolish saying that money is the cause of all evil. Like all such generalizations there is but a modicum of truth in such an assertion. But there are instances in which an ill-use of money is attended by grave consequences ; and you will search far before you find a more glaring example of this than the case of the 7th Earl of Barrymore, who was born with all the advantages the most exacting could require but who spoilt all these gifts by his ignorance in knowing what to do with them ; or as an alternative, his perversity in their use.

The details of the life of such a man cannot but arouse the curiosity of all who care to study *les égarements de l'esprit humain* ; and just as the author of the pamphlet entitled *Truth opposed to Fiction*, wrote soon after Barrymore's death that " His lordship having from his earliest embarkation in life industriously rendered himself an object of the most eager curiosity, it can now be no matter of surprise that his eccentricities when living and

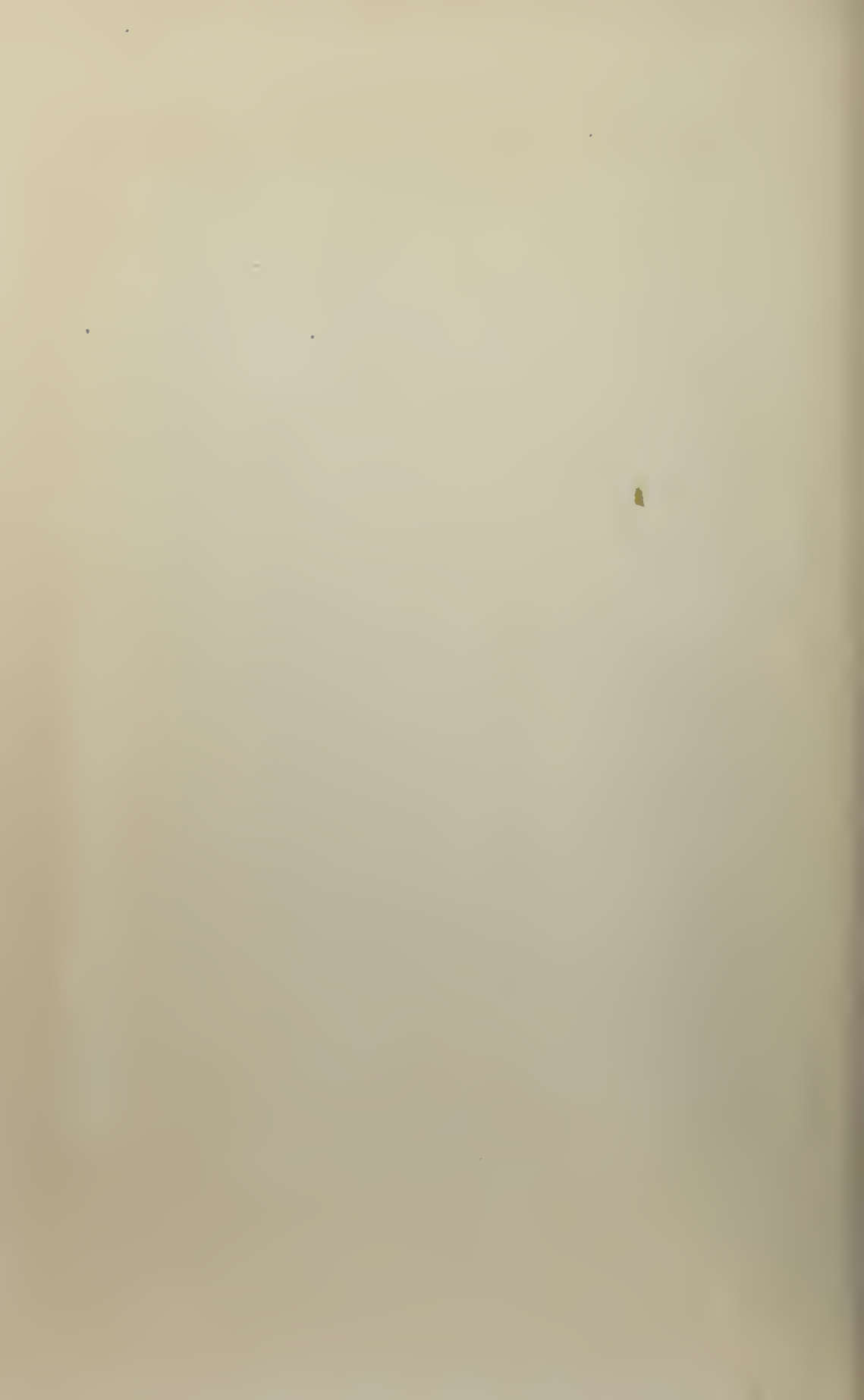
universally lamented fall in the melancholy moment of his death, should make retrospection of conduct and character matter of more notorious avidity," so after the lapse of a hundred and thirty odd years that curiosity has not quite died out, and the more outstanding incidents of Barrymore's career are still, I believe, sufficiently curious at least to point a moral ; and he properly takes his place in that gallery of rakes whose doings were as much the wonder of their own times as they are of ours.

I am jotting down these concluding lines in the Wargrave which I know so well ; the Wargrave of Thomas Day and of Lord Barrymore. And as I once again pace the street of that picturesque little village and pass by the house where the egregious young fool of quality disported himself and flung away so much money, and pass the site where once his splendid little theatre stood, the place becomes full of a ghostly company. Coaches and gigs, and *vis-à-vis* and sedans, fill the approaches to the play-house ; the royal Prince comes down from Mr. Hill's mansion, with a laughing train ; Marshal Conway and Lady Aylesbury dash along the Henley road from Park Place ; Mrs. Lybbe-Powys and her party arrive in their coach from further Hardwick ; and the Winfords are there, and gay detachments from Fawley and Culham Court ; the Rotunda is a-blaze with the light of many candles, and Anthony Pasquin is as busy as a bee in the

theatre ; and Barrymore himself is resplendent in his ' Don Juan ' costume. . . .

Or they hunt the stag, with accessories in the French *éblouissant* style, with curling horns and in gorgeous dresses ; and the quarry takes to the water, and the followers of the hunt dash into the stream laughing and shouting, or ride up and down the banks, inciting the more daring. . . . Or, it may be, one assists at a pic-nic, and helps dig for hidden treasure in the shape of food and wine whose *caches* have been carefully prepared and as carefully indicated. Whatever it be, there is Barrymore, first among the gay throng, the leader in the most daring exploits, the utterer of the wildest jest ; the gay, hapless irresponsible lord of the thousands he gaily and irresponsibly cast away. . . .

There is something not a little sad in the inevitable reflection on opportunities thus wasted, good gifts thus squandered, a great name thus marred ; but somehow the ghost of the young scapegrace Barrymore seems more friendly, certainly less fearsome, than that of the smug Mr. Day, with his wise saws and educational precepts ready, one thinks, to issue from his retruded lips, as each haunts about the church where its corporeal entity sleeps its last sleep beneath the altar steps. . . .







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